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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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CWC asks RaGa to take on LS Leader of Oppn mantle

Rahul told the party that he will take a decision on it soon

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

Congress Working Committee (CWC) on Saturday unanimously urged Rahul Gandhi to take on the mantle of the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha. However, Rahul told the party's top brass that he will take a decision on it "very soon".

At a meeting of the CWC, the party's highest decision-making body, chaired by Congress Chief Mallikarjun Kharge and attended by Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, among others, the party's Lok Sabha polls showing was hailed but it was also decided that separate committees would be set up in states where the performance was not good or below expectations, to take corrective measures.

Meanwhile, Sonia was unanimously re-elected as the chairperson of Congress parliamentary party on Saturday.

Kharge said the Lok Sabha poll mandate is a "decisive rejection" of the politics of divisiveness and hate, and stressed that the INDIA bloc must continue functioning cohesively both inside and outside Parliament.

The CWC also hailed the roles played by Sonia Gandhi, Mallikarjun Kharge, and Rahul Gandhi during the Lok Sabha polls ***PHOTO: PTI***

Two resolutions were unanimously passed by the CWC, including one requesting Rahul Gandhi to assume the position of the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha.

In the other resolution, CWC congratulated the people for voting so powerfully to preserve democracy, protect the Constitution and enhance social and economic justice.

In his opening remarks at the meeting, Kharge asserted that while celebrating its "revival", the party should pause a little as it did not perform to its abilities and expectations in some states.

"We have to take urgent remedial measures. These are states which have traditionally favoured the Congress, where we have opportunities which we have to harness not for our own advantage but for the benefit of our people," he said. Kharge further said whether the party is in power or not, its work continues amongst people "24 hours, 365 days", and raise their issues.

> **BJP is forming the government undemocratically and illegally. Today, INDIA bloc may not have staked a claim to form the government, but that doesn't mean they won't tomorrow**
>
> -Mamata Banerjee, TMC Chief

"People have spoken against the dictatorial and anti-democratic ways of the ruling party. It is a decisive rejection of the politics of the last 10 years. It is rejection of the politics of divisiveness, hate and polarisation," Kharge said.

Kharge also hailed INDIA bloc partners, saying each party played its designated role in different states, and each party contributed to the other. The CWC said that Rahul has to be singled out largely because of the Bharat Jodo Yatra and the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra that he designed and led. *—PTI*

TMC TO BOYCOTT

Hasina, Muizzu to attend Modi's swearing-in

SHEIKH HASINA
PHOTO: X/@SHEIKH_HASINAA

ANIL WICKREMESINGHE,
PHOTO: PTI

PUSHPA KAMAL DAHAL
PHOTO: X/@CMPRACHANDA

MOHAMED MUIZZU
PHOTO: X/@MMUIZZU

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

A host of heads of government from neighbouring countries will attend the swearing-in ceremony of Narendra Modi as prime minister for a third consecutive term on Sunday evening.

An official statement said Sri Lanka's President Ranil Wickremesinghe, Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina, President of Maldives Mohamed Muizzu, Prime Minister of Bhutan Tshering Tobgay, Nepal's Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', Vice-President of Seychelles Ahmed and Mauritius' Pravind Kumar Jugnauth have accepted the invitation to attend the event. Hasina and Afif have already arrived in Delhi. "In addition to participating in the swearing-in ceremony, the leaders will attend a Banquet hosted by President Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan, the same evening," the statement said. It added that the visit of the leaders to attend the swearing-in ceremony is in keeping with the highest priority accorded by India to its 'Neighbourhood First' policy and 'SAGAR' vision.

Muizzu said that he would be honoured to attend Modi's swearing-in ceremony and his first visit to India for the historic event would demonstrate that bilateral ties are heading in a "positive direction".

TMC Supremo and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said the party will not attend the swearing-in ceremony of the new government because the government is being formed "illegally and undemocratically".

TSHERING TOBGAY
PHOTO: X/@TSHERINGTOBGAY

TDP to get four ministers, JD(U) two

The day before forming the new cabinet TDP to get four ministers while JD (U) is expected to get two more births, sources said. The decision was taken during the NDA meeting.

Nitish Kumar's JD (U) has proposed the name of two leaders- Ram Nath Thakur and Lalan Singh. The three of the four candidates from Chandrababu Naidu's TDP who might get place in the new cabinet are- Ram Mohan Naidu, Daggumalla Prasad and Harish Balayogi.

Delhi Police has taken strict measures to ensure security during the event. Multi-layered security arrangements have been arranged for the event. Five companies of paramilitary forces will be deployed.

—Salar News with agencies

Spl team to probe killing of Ch'garh cattle transporters

RAIPUR, 8 JUNE

A special team was constituted by Raipur Rural police in Chhattisgarh to probe the death of two cattle transporters, whose kin claimed it was the result of a brutal mob attack. Two cattle transporters died and another sustained serious injuries after allegedly being chased by a mob in Arnag police station limits on Friday. The deceased are Chand Miya and Guddu Khan and the injured as Saddam Khan, all hailing from Uttar Pradesh.

In the FIR, complainant Shoheb Khan said Chand informed him over phone that when the three were heading towards Arang from Mahasamund in a truck loaded with cattle (buffaloes), they were chased by some people on motorcycles and other vehicles. *—PTI*

Two UBT LS MPs in touch with Eknath Shinde: Sena

MUMBAI, 8 JUNE

Shiv Sena on Saturday claimed two newly elected Lok Sabha members from Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena (UBT) were in touch with Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

Hitting back, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sachin Ahir said the claim is being made out of fear and desperation as Shiv Sena lawmakers are now apprehensive over who will be their alliance face when they contest polls in the state, which will be held in the second half of the year.

Addressing a press conference here, Shiv Sena spokesperson Naresh Mhaske refused to name the two Lok Sabha members citing the anti-defection law, but said that four more lawmakers would soon join the two and cross over to the Shinde-led party. *—PTI*

IGA WINS 3RD FRENCH OPEN

Poland's Iga Swiatek holds the trophy after winning the women's final of the French Open tennis tournament against Italy's Jasmine Paolini at the Roland Garros stadium in Paris, France on Saturday ***PHOTO: AP*** ***>>>More on Page 8***

Cook killed in 'firing' along IB in Samba

SAMBA/JAMMU, 8 JUNE

In a case of mistaken identity, a 26-year-old man was killed when the Border Security Force (BSF) troops opened fire on observing suspicious movement near a forward post along the International Border (IB) in Jammu and Kashmir's Samba district, officials said on Saturday.

The deceased was identified as Vasudeva, a resident of Akhnoor area of Jammu district, who was working as a cook in a company engaged in construction work in the border area, they said.

"An untoward incident took place at border outpost Regal late Friday night when the BSF personnel, as per preliminary investigation, observed some suspicious movement and on being challenged, the individual apparently got frightened and started running away following which the troops opened fire," Samba Additional Superintendent of Police Surinder Choudhary told reporters.

He said the man was critically injured and was rushed to the hospital but succumbed to his injuries.

The body of the deceased was handed over to his family after completion of all formalities, including post-mortem, this morning.

According to Vasudeva's colleagues, the incident took place when he had gone out of his tented accommodation to relieve himself. *—PTI*

GOVT PANEL TO REVIEW NEET GRACE MARKS ROW

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

The education ministry has set up a four-member panel to review the grace marks awarded to more than 1,500 candidates in the NEET-UG medical entrance exam, the National Testing Agency (NTA) announced on Saturday. The move comes amid allegations of inflation of marks leading to 67 candidates sharing first rank in the exam.

There have been calls from several quarters for a re-exam alleging that the grace marks awarded to make up for the loss of time at six exam centres have led to the inflation of marks and tampered with the chances of other candidates.

These centres are from Meghalaya, Bahadurgarh in Haryana, Dantewada and Balodh in Chhattisgarh. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

Several houses have been burnt in outlying areas of Jiribam ***PHOTO: PTI***

Houses, police outpost set on fire in Manipur

IMPHAL, 8 JUNE

Suspected militants torched a police outpost and set several houses on fire in Manipur's Jiribam district on Saturday, officials said.

The militants torched the Jiri police outpost located in Chotobekra area on the banks of the Barak river at around 12.30am, they said.

The gunmen suspected to be hill-based militants also launched multiple attacks taking advantage of the darkness at Lamtai khunou, Modhupur area of the district located nearly 220km from the state capital Imphal.

Several houses have been burnt, mostly in the outlying areas of Jiribam district though the exact number cannot be confirmed, a district official based in Jiribam told PTI.

A commando contingent of Manipur Police has been airlifted to Jiribam on Saturday morning from Imphal to assist in the security operations against the militants, police said.

Meanwhile, newly elected Congress MP from the Inner Manipur Lok Sabha seat Angomcha Bimol Akoijam has urged the state government to protect the lives and properties of the people of Jiribam district.

Akoijam told reporters at a press conference here that, "I have talked with district officials of Jiribam. They said some reinforcements have reached. While those in the town are being provided security, those in peripheral areas are not being provided security." Nearly 239 people mostly women and children have been evacuated from their villages in the Jiribam district. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

EC STARTS ASSEMBLY POLLS EXERCISE IN J&K

SRINAGAR, 8 JUNE

Election Commission of India (ECI) has officially started the process of holding Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K).

"The commission has decided to accept applications seeking allotment of common symbol under Para 10B of election symbols (Reservation & Allotment) order 1968 for the General Election to the legislative Assembly of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir with immediate effect," said Jaydeb Lahiri, Secretary of the Election Commission of India through a Press note.

The last Assembly election was held in 2014, after which a coalition government of the BJP and the PDP headed by Mufti Mohammad Sayeed came to power. After Mufti;s death in 2016, the coalition was headed by his daughter, Mehbooba Mufti.

BJP withdrew from the coalition government on 18 June, 2019 following which Mehbooba Mufti resigned as the chief minister. Governor's Rule was imposed in J&K which was followed by President's Rule. It was made a Union Territory on 5 August, 2019 when Articles 370 and 35A were abrogated. *—IANS*

55-YEAR-LONG CAREER

Media baron, ETV head Ramoji Rao dies

HYDERABAD, 8 MAY

Veteran media personality and business tycoon Ch Ramoji Rao, who died here on Saturday, was a versatile genius whose work is unparalleled across various fields like media, hospitality, NBFC, food and retail store chain.

Ramoji Rao's rise to become the founder of Eenadu, the largest circulated Telugu daily, and a media mogul, from humble beginnings is legendary. The firms founded by him -- Eenadu newspaper, ETV bouquet of channels, the world's largest film city Ramoji Film City, Dolphin group of hotels, Margadarsi Chit Fund, film production company Ushakiran movies, Priya Foods and others provided jobs to thousands and continue to impact the lives of millions in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana and elsewhere.

Ch Ramoji Rao ***PHOTO: ANI***

Ramoji Rao had also served as chairman of Editors Guild of India.

Born on 16 November, 1936 in Krishna district of coastal Andhra Pradesh, he started the Margadarsi Chit Fund in 1962 which serves customers in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana and other states.

Hailing from a middle-class family of farmers, Ramoji Rao ventured into the media sector with the launch of 'Annadata', a magazine for the peasants, in 1969. The Eenadu founded by him in the port city of Visakhapatnam in 1974 revolutionized the newspaper industry in undivided Andhra Pradesh and continues to be the largest circulated Telugu daily with multiple editions.

Eenadu's campaign 'to restore democracy' when TDP founder NT Rama Rao was dislodged from power in 1984 in a bloodless coup which ultimately led to NTR returning to power is a milestone in Ramoji Rao's life.

Permanent houses and schools have been built in several states with the funds collected through Eenadu relief fund following natural calamities. Ramoji Rao was honoured with the second highest civilian award, Padma Vibhushan in 2016.

He was also a recipient of several other awards and honorary doctorates from various universities. *—PTI*

4 hurt as car falls into Ramangara lake

BENGALURU, 8 JUNE

Four people were injured after a speeding car lost control and plunged into a lake adjacent to Bengaluru-Mysuru Expressway near Sankalagere Gate in Ramangara on Saturday. The victims, who were travelling from Bengaluru and Mysuru, were shifted to a nearby hospital. Channapatna police registered a case. The rise in accidents along the expressway can be attributed to speeding and other traffic violations committed by motorists. Since its implementation, Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras installed on the expressway have captured a total of 74,915 traffic violations in just 28 days.
—Salar News

Lineman electrocuted during repair work

CHIKKABALLAPUR, 8 JUNE

A lineman with BESCOM was electrocuted when he was attending repair work at Bisalahalli in Manchenahalli taluk near Gauribidanuru on Saturday. Uday, 28, hailed from Nayakanahatti in Challakere taluk of Chitradurga district. Around 9.30am when Uday was fixing a power line problem in the village, he came in contact with a live wire and got electrocuted. According to Parameswarappa, AEE, Gauribidanuru, Uday had informed Assistant Engineer that some residences in the village are experiencing grounding issues and he needs to fix the problem. He had asked permission for the GOS (Group Operated Switch) to get line clearance of the particular line. It is not clear as to whether he had switched off the GOS or not and got electrocuted, the AEE said. He said the district authorities of Electrical Inspectorate are conducting an investigation to assess the cause of the accident.
—Salar News

Ifs and buts weigh down families of U'khand tragedy

BENGALURU, 8 JUNE

Five days after the freak weather incident that saw the death of nine trekkers from Karnataka in Uttarakhand, ifs and buts still weigh down families and friends of 22 trekkers who got caught in the blizzard. "You know, Sindhu was not planning to go for this trek. But when her friend and fellow member of Karnataka Mountaineering Association (KMA), Asha Sudhakar insisted that Sindhu also come, she decided to go eventually," NR Satheesan, Sindhu's brother-in-law and Thrissur Congress Committee general secretary, told PTI. Sindhu, a 46-year-old techie and her 71-year-old friend Asha, one of the oldest women trekkers of Karnataka, were among the nine who died on 3 June. Asha was accompanied by her husband S Sudhakar, also 71 years old, who survived the ordeal.As for Sindhu, a native of Palakkad settled in Bengaluru, she is survived by her husband, who incidentally also used to go on treks with her every now and then, and her two sons – one of whom just completed his undergraduate course this year while the other is pursuing a course in hotel management in Udupi.As soon as he heard the news, Satheesan said he rushed to Bengaluru to be at his brother's side as he received the body. Satheesan said Sindhu was free-spirited, energetic and adventurous and really enjoyed trekking. All the trekkers who went on this trip were experienced – they have been trekking for at least six years, said Suma Sarjapur, 48, wife of one of the survivors, 52-year-old Madhu Kiran. "My husband has been going on treks with some of them, on and off, for the last couple of years," said Sarjapur. Sarjapur said her family of three – including her 21-year-old son – were passionate trekkers. She and her husband have been trekking for more than 20 years, she said. They even decided to pursue trekking professionally. *—PTI*

BJP asks CM to quit over ₹87 cr Valmiki Corp scam

BJP also wants Basanagouda Daddal to quit as corp Chairperson

BENGALURU, 8 JUNE

Siddaramaiah *PHOTO: PTI*

BJP on Saturday demanded the resignation of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in the alleged Rs 87 crore fraud in Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation Limited.

The State Tribal Welfare minister B Nagendra has already resigned.

In a post on 'X,' the party shared an affidavit of the 'accused number eight, which was submitted in court.

In the purported affidavit, the advocate for 'accused number eight' requested the court to direct the investigating officer to collect and preserve the CCTV footage captured near the Higher Education Minister's chamber, Vidhana Soudha 24 May from 10 am to 3 pm and all CCTV footage of Union Bank of India, MG Road Branch for three months from 1 March, 2024 to 1 June, 2024 and a mirror view image of the phone seized from the 'accused No.8'.The petitioner has also requested the court to direct the authorities to preserve the WhatApp chat between the "accused number eight and the contact's name saved as 'Basavanagowda Daddal' along with hash value and 65B Certificate, in the interest of justice and equity."

While Karnataka government has constituted a Special Investigation Team to probe the case, the Union Bank of India has handed over the matter to Central Bureau of Investigation.

Basanagouda Daddal is the Raichur Rural Congress MLA and Chairman of the Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation Limited (KMVSTDCL).

"It is impossible for the SIT to conduct an impartial investigation into this scam involving the Chief Minister, Ministers and MLAs. Therefore, BJP demands that Siddaramaiah should hand over the case to CBI and resign and cooperate with the investigation," the party said on 'X'.

BJP also demanded that MLA Daddal step down as Valmiki Corporation chairman. *—PTI*

Didn't tamper evidence, says Sharan Prakash

BENGALURU, 8 JUNE

Sharan Prakash Patil *PHOTO: PTI*

- Medical Education and Skill Development Minister Sharan Prakash Patil rejected the allegation said that he is ready to face any probe

Medical Education and Skill Development Minister Sharan Prakash Patil rejected the allegation of evidence tampering in Valmiki Development Corporation scam, and said that he is ready to face any probe.

Speaking to reporters, he denied meeting any official of in Vikasa Soudha to destroy the evidence.

Patil said, "There is an accusation that I held a meeting with Valmiki Development Corporation Chairman Basavaraj Daddal and others at Vikasa Soudha office in Bengaluru on 24 May. However, since Model Code of Conduct was in force, I didn't come to my office on the said date."."I've no authority to say no to any probe ordered by the government. I'm content with my honest work and not bothered about false charges. Moreover, the office at Vikasa Soudha is not my own place but allotted by the government. As a Minister, I meet the people from different parts of the State. How can I check the antecedents of each person," he questioned.

Asserting that he was not acquainted with the said officer, he denied any connection with him. "I've not even seen the accused's face who is in SIT custody and I've nothing to do with him. I'm not even aware of his statement before the SIT officials," Patil wondered. *—Salar News*

Repair works to cause power cuts till 12 June

BENGALURU, 8 JUNE

PHOTO: PTI

Bengaluru is likely to face scheduled power cuts till Wednesday (12 June), as the Bangalore Electricity Supply Company (BESCOM) and the Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Limited (KPTCL) are in the midst of finishing several impending projects

According to BESCOM, these projects include those under periodical maintenance for the first quarter, among many other works. Most of these outages are likely to occur between 10 am and 4 pm. The affected areas are:

Many areas such as Queens Road, Thimmaiah Road, Miller's Road, Cunningham Road, Ali Askar Road, Chandini Chowk, Miller Tank Bund Road, Bamboo Bazaar Road, Broadway Road, Cockburn Road, Seppings Road, Bowring Hospital, Infantry Road, VV Towers, MS Building, CID, MEG Centre, Raj Bhavan, Vasanth Nagar, Vidhana Soudha and Vikasa Soudha witnessed power cuts on Saturday.

The areas that will face power cuts are:

9 June: Yadiyur, Doddamadure, Manavallli, Kachenahalli, Nagasandra, CT Palya, Thippur, Hemavathi and Chikkamadure.

10 June: C Kuppe, Tavarekere, Hakki Maripalya, Hangrahalli, MH Palya, T Bommenahalli, Neelasandra and R Byadarahalli.

11 June: Adugodi, Salarpuria Tower, Chikka Adugodi, Nanjappa Layout, Chikka Lakshmaiah Layout, Wilson Garden, Lakkasandra and Laljinagar.

12 June: Srinagar, Hosakerehalli, Veerabhadranagar, New Timberyard (NTY) Layout, Thyagarajanagar, BSK III Stage, Katriguppe, Girinagar 4th Phase, Wilson Garden, J C Road, Shantinagar, Richmond Circle, Residency Road, Lalbagh Road, Sampangirama nagar, KH Road, Subbaiah Circle and Sudhamanagar.
—Salar News

LONG STANDING FAMILY FEUD

Shivarajkumar fans lay siege to Kumar Bangarappa's home

BENGALURU, 8 JUNE

Police arrived at the spot to quell the mob and detained the protesters *PHOTO: SALAR*

A long-standing family feud between senior BJP leader Kumar Bangarappa, son of former chief minister late S Bangarappa, and his sister and Shivamogga losing Congress candidate Geetha Shivarajkumar turned ugly on Saturday. Fans of Kannada superstar Shivarajkumar barged into the residence of Kumar at Sadashivnagar over some derogatory comments he posted on Facebook.

Police arrived at the spot to quell the mob and detained the protestors.

After his sister Geetha's defeat, Kumar put up a post on Facebook, criticising her for 'misusing' their late father, former chief minister S Bangarappa's, name. In the post, he also mocked his brother-in-law Shivarajkumar, suggesting he need not fear unemployment and could start applying to perform at religious fairs in the villages of Shivamogga district.

Angered by this, the protestors forcefully entered the leader's residence chanting slogans against Kumar. Security was beefed up at Kumar's residence as a platoon of Karnataka State Reserve Police (KSRP) was deployed to keep the protestors at bay.

Shivarajkumar's wife, Geetha Shivarajkumar was pitted against BJP candidate BY Raghavendra in Shivamogga Lok Sabha seat as a Congress candidate. Raghavendra won the Shivamogga Lok Sabha seat by a comfortable margin of 2.43 lakh votes. Kumar, who is close to former chief minister BS Yediyurappa's family, had campaigned for Raghavendra.

Kumar Bangarappa's brother, Madhu Bangarappa, is the Minister for Education in the Congress government.
—Salar News

Prajwal taken to his house for spot inspection

HASSAN, 8 JUNE

Prajwal Revanna *PHOTO: PTI*

- His father- Holenarasipura MLA HD Revanna- and mother Bhavani Revanna are out on bail in a kidnapping case pertaining to the abduction of a woman who had allegedly figured in scores of videos of sexual assault allegedly by Prajwal

A Special Investigation Team on Saturday took suspended JD(S) leader Prajwal Revanna to his house at Holenarasipura in Hassan district for spot inspection.

The 33-year-old Prajwal, who lost the Lok Sabha election as an NDA candidate from Hassan is facing sexual assault cases.

His father- Holenarasipura MLA HD Revanna- and mother Bhavani Revanna are out on bail in a kidnapping case pertaining to the abduction of a woman who had allegedly figured in scores of videos of sexual assault allegedly by Prajwal.

According to police sources, Special Investigation Team (SIT) personnel brought Prajwal, the former Hassan MP, to his Holenaraseepur residence amid tight security.

As a precautionary measure, the entire area was cordoned off.

Wearing a black T-shirt and a mask on his face, the MP reached his residence for the first time since 27 April.

He had fled to Germany as explicit videos went viral showing women being sexually abused allegedly by him.

Prajwal, the grandson of former Prime Minister and JD(S) supremo HD Deve Gowda, returned on 31 May only to be arrested by the SIT, which was constituted to investigate the charges of sexual assault against him. *—Salar News*

REVIEW GUARANTEE SCHEMES, SAYS CONG'S LAKSHMAN

MYSURU, 8 JUNE

There is a need to re-evaluate State government's guarantee schemes as people don't support them, said M Lakshman, Congress candidate who lost from Mysuru in Lok Sabha elections, on Saturday.

It's evident from the election results that the public is not in favour of the guarantee schemes. Around 70% of beneficiaries of the guarantee schemes belong to upper-class communities, Lakshman said. He questioned how a salaried person can benefit from free electricity with an income as low as Rs 25,000 per month. He said there is a need to focus on those who genuinely require such assistance.

Lakshman said cited instances in Hunsur villages. These villages, predominantly consisting of Vokkaliga Gowda community, gave over 600 votes to BJP candidate (Yaduveer Wadiyar) while giving only three or seven votes to him. This reflects clear resentment against his party, Lakshman said.

Lakshman expressed his disappointment with how his party has treated Siddaramaiah, stating that the Chief Minister has made significant contributions to Mysuru, including Jayadeva Hospital, and has maintained an exemplary image throughout his political career. He questioned why other leaders did not recognise these achievements and instead chose to insult him repeatedly. *—Salar News*

M Lakshman *PHOTO: PTI*

Over 1,500 Kannadigas return from Kuwait during amnesty scheme

DANIEL GEORGE
BENGALURU, 8 JUNE

Around 35,000 expatriates from various nationalities, 10,000 Indians, have benefited from the amnesty campaign *PHOTO: ARAB NEWS*

More than 1,500 Kannadigas working in Kuwait have returned to Karnataka during an amnesty scheme which began on 17 March, 2024, and ends on 17 June, 2024.

The Gulf nation had announced the amnesty to weed out residency violations by allowing expatriates from all nationalities to either leave Kuwait without paying fines or regularise their status by fulfilling the necessary legal requirements.

Around 35,000 expatriates from various nationalities, including more than 10,000 Indians, have benefited from the amnesty campaign, according to diplomatic sources at the Indian Embassy in Kuwait. The majority of the 1,500 Kannadigas who returned are from Dakshina Kannada district and were largely employed in the hotel and hospitality industry.

The majority of the Indians returned had run away from their original sponsors or employers due to unpaid salaries or were found working in the Gulf Nation illegally. "Those Indians who did not have a valid Indian passport or those whose visas had expired and were living illegally in Kuwait have been given an out pass (a one-way travel document to travel back to India)," an Indian diplomat at the Indian Embassy in Kuwait told Salar News.

Around 9.8 lakh Indians live in Kuwait and they are the largest expat community in the Gulf Nation, according to the Indian Embassy data released on 27 March, 2023. Around 3.6 lakh of them work in the domestic sector as workers (housemaids, houseboys, drivers, cooks and gardeners) who are not allowed to bring in their dependents. The private sector workers constitute around 4.7 lakh (construction workers, technicians, company drivers, engineers, doctors, nurses, chartered accountants and IT experts). Another category is that of dependents of people on work visas (1.08 lakh), out of which, about 40,000 Indian students are studying in 26 Indian schools in the country. The government sector has around 25,000 Indian nationals (mainly engineers, doctors, paramedics and nurses), according to the government data.

In its poll promises, Congress government in the State had assured of the establishment of a dedicated ministry for Non-Resident Indians. This initiative, modelled after Kerala's NRI ministry, aims to address the issues faced by Kannadiga NRIs worldwide.
—Salar News

CM behind DK Suresh's poll defeat: BJP MLA

TUMAKURU, 8 JUNE

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his team were responsible for the defeat of Congress candidate DK Suresh in Bengaluru Rural constituency in Lok Sabha elections, said BJP MLA Suresh Gowda here on Saturday.

Siddaramaiah and his Ahinda (minorities, backward classes and Dalits) team of Satish Jarkiholi, G Parameshwara and KN Rajanna orchestrated the defeat of Suresh, who is the brother of Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, he said.

The Tumakuru Rural MLA said he had predicted a victory margin of 2 lakh votes for BJP candidate CN Manjunath.

But when the result came, his prediction was surpassed by a significant margin (Suresh lost by 2.7 lakh votes).

This was part of a large plot by Siddaramaiah and his team to stymie Shivakumar's plan to become Chief Minister.
—Salar News

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and BJP MLA Suresh Gowda *PHOTO: SALAR*

'WONDER PILL'

Thousands flock to Koppal for asthma cure

KOPPAL, 8 JUNE

'Wonder pill' prepared by traditional healer Ashok Rao Kulkarni is drawing people from several parts of State and Maharashtra *PHOTO: PTI*

A sleepy village in Koppal district came to life on Saturday as thousands of people from various parts of the country descended on it to receive a herbal medicine that cures respiratory problems, mainly Asthma.

The 'wonder pill' prepared by traditional healer Ashok Rao Kulkarni is drawing people from several parts of State, neighbouring Maharashtra, and all southern states to Kutaganahalli village.

The medication, according to Kulkarni, has to be administered and consumed when moon transcends from 'Mrugashira Nakshatra' to 'Ardra Nakshatra'.

The actual 'Muhurta' (auspicious time) for consuming the medicine fell at 7.47am on Saturday.

Kulkarni's family claimed that the medicine is especially helpful in 'Jyeshtha Maasa' of Hindu lunar calendar when there are rains in the region.

Hence, there was enormous crowd on Saturday.

The Kulkarnis have completed a century giving this medicine to people.

"Earlier my father Vyasa Rao Kulkarni gave this medicine for 60 years and after him, I started giving it. This is my 40th year distributing the medicines," Kulkarni told reporters in Kutaganahalli.

It is the century old trust in the medicine that brings people to the village in droves to obtain the medicine free of cost.

Sporting a 'Dhoti', 'Anga Vastram' and a Tilak of vermillion on his forehead, the bare-chested Kulkarni was ready with globular medicines to hand them over to the needy.

The scene at Kutaganahalli was akin to a grand fair. Expecting a huge turnout, several vendors put up their temporary stalls selling vegetables, food items and knick-knacks.

A huge number of four-wheelers, including SUVs lined up in the village as people formed long queue to receive the 'wonder pill', which is the family secret of Kulkarnis.
—PTI

PHOTO: PTI

Atishi says Haryana not releasing 1,050 cusecs of water

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

Haryana is not releasing to Delhi its share of 1,050 cusecs of water through the Munank canal, the city government's Water Minister Atishi alleged on Saturday. Addressing a press conference, Atishi said during the summer, when Haryana releases 1,050 cusecs of water, Delhi receives about 995 cusecs. "However, in the past one week, Delhi has been getting less water. It received 924 cusecs on 1 June, 884 cusecs on 4 June, 856 cusecs on 6 June, and 840 cusecs on 7 June," she said. However, BJP demanded that the Delhi Assembly speaker call a special session of the House to discuss the prevailing "water crisis" that it blamed on the AAP government's "mismanagement". BJP Chief whip, Ajay Mahawar, in a letter to Speaker Ram Niwas Goel, said the whole of Delhi is struggling with a water shortage amid unprecedented heat. *—PTI*

Haryana to soon recruit for 50,000 posts

CHANDIGARH, 8 JUNE

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Saturday said his government will soon initiate the recruitment process to fill 50,000 vacant posts in the state. This will be done as part of the government's ongoing efforts to provide employment opportunities and support the aspirations of the youth, he said on the sidelines of the swearing-in ceremony of the new chairman of the Haryana Staff Selection Commission. The chief minister stressed on the continuation of the "transparent" recruitment system for government jobs. The state government is going to provide 50,000 new job opportunities, Saini said and added that the present dispensation has given jobs on merit basis without any discrimination. *—PTI*

TMC's actor-MLA assaults restaurant owner, regrets later

KOLKATA, 8 JUNE

Actor-turned-Trinamool Congress MLA Soham Chakraborty created a controversy by assaulting a restaurant owner who allegedly abused party MP Abhishek Banerjee during the shooting of a film there. Both Chakraborty and restaurant owner Anisul Alam lodged complaints with the police against each other, an officer said on Saturday. The MLA later said he wanted to apologise to Alam as he should have controlled his anger. The problem between the two sides began over parking the cars of Chakraborty and his men in front of the eatery in New Town near Kolkata. The CCTV footage showed Chakraborty was seen assaulting Alam. *—PTI*

Muraleedharan's defeat: Violence erupts in DCC office

THRISSUR, 8 JUNE

BJP's historic win in the Thrissur Lok Sabha seat resulted in a fight at the Congress DCC office here over the defeat of party leader K Muraleedharan from this central Kerala constituency. The police on Saturday registered a First Information Report against Thrissur District Congress Committee (DCC) President Jose Vallur and 19 other members of the party on the complaint of DCC secretary Sajeevan Kuriachira. The 20 accused have been booked under various bailable sections of the IPC for unlawful assembly, rioting, wrongful restraint and voluntarily causing hurt. Kuriachira, in his complaint, has alleged that he was beaten up by Vallur and his supporters at the DCC office on Friday. Kuriachira is part of the group close to. He that has blamed former MP TN Prathapan and Vallur for the party's drubbing. *—PTI*

Bill to raise marriage age for women lapses

The bill aimed to amend the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act to increase the min age to 21

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

With the dissolution of the 17th Lok Sabha, a bill that aimed to bring uniformity in the age of marriage for men and women has lapsed.

The Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2021 was introduced in the Lok Sabha in December 2021 and was referred to the standing committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports.

The standing committee received multiple extensions over a period of time. Citing

- The bill aimed to amend the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 to increase the minimum age of marriage of females to 21 years.

provisions of law and Constitution, former Lok Sabha Secretary-General and Constitution expert PDT Acharya told PTI that with the dissolution of the 17th Lok Sabha, "the bill has now lapsed".

The bill aimed to amend the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 to increase the minimum age of marriage of females to 21 years. Further, the Bill would have overridden any other law, custom, or practice.

Under the 2006 Act, a person married below the minimum age may apply for annulment within two years of attaining majority (i.e., before 20 years of age). The Bill increases this to five years (i.e., 23 years of age). The 17 Lok Sabha was dissolved after the members of the 18th Lok Sabha were elected in the general elections. *—PTI*

WHAT'S NEXT

- Once a bill lapses, it has to be introduced again in Central/State legislature
- Prorogation has no effect on a pending bill
- All motions, resolutions, amendments etc. pending in LS lapse on its dissolution

The standing committee received multiple extensions over a period of time
PHOTO: PIXABAY

Congress garnered DMK votes: Tamilisai

CHENNAI, 8 JUNE

BJP leader Tamilisai Soundararajan on Saturday said Congress, if it had fought on its own in Tamil Nadu in the recently concluded Lok Sabha polls, it would not have been able to retain deposit in any of the segments.

Speaking to reporters at the airport, Tamilisai, answering a question on a reported remark of Tamil Nadu Congress Committee President K Selvaperunthagai that votes secured by BJP were 'PMK votes,' wondered if all the votes cast in favour of the grand old party in the state were 'DMK' votes.

Further, she said: "Congress leader Selvaperunthagai says votes secured by BJP were PMK votes, and in that case, votes received by Congress party were actually the DMK votes. Will Chief Minister MK Stalin deny this?"

Tamilisai, who unsuccessfully fought from south Chennai Lok Sabha constituency said, "You (Congress) could have fought on your own! Had Selvaperunthagai, a reference to the Congress party, fought on his own in Tamil Nadu, the party would

Tamilisai Soundararajan
PHOTO: PTI

not have been able to retain deposit in any of the constituencies in the state.

Selvaperunthagai has no moral right to criticise BJP since the Congress rides piggyback on DMK and it is only due to the support of DMK and other parties in that alliance, the Congress has won in the state.

Unlike Congress, BJP remains strong in Tamil Nadu and the party has the courage to even go it alone in polls.

When Selvaperunthagai recently spoke of the aspiration to usher in Kamarajar's rule (Congress rule), senior leader EVKS Elangovan retorted that the DMK's rule was Kamaraj's rule and hence, the Congress party could only go on like this in Tamil Nadu without making any progress, she said. *—PTI*

AIADMK bettered its show, says Palaniswami

SALEM, 8 JUNE

AIADMK chief Edappadi K Palaniswami on Saturday said his party had improved its performance in the recently concluded Lok Sabha polls when compared to the 2019 LS elections and taunted BJP leader K Annamalai and others like him for the Saffron party failing to cross the majority mark on its own.

Speaking to reporters following a party meeting, for the first time after the declaration of results of the 2024 LS polls, Palaniswami rejected the view that several seats could have

K Palaniswami PHOTO: PTI

been won had there been an alliance between AIADMK and BJP. AIADMK failed to win a single Parliamentary seat in

Tamil Nadu.

Had allies of the DMK, if they had joined hands with his party, "all the segments in the state would have been won," he said. Success and failure in elections depend on change in circumstances in the run-up to the polls and it differs from time to time and from state to national polls.

On BJP failing to get a majority on its own at the Centre, Palaniswami said the setback appears to be due to leaders like Saffron party's chief in Tamil Nadu K Annamalai and there seem to be many leaders in several states in the party like Annamalai.

In other parties, a string of leaders were in the field and as far his party was concerned, he singularly led the campaign. Despite challenges such as a 'defamatory and disinformation campaign' aimed at AIADMK by rivals, he said the party performed better than in the 2019 LS polls and got 'one per cent more' in 2024, a big victory for it, he said.

In 2014, though DMK did not win a single LS seat in the state, it succeeded in subsequent polls. Hence, he asserted that the view that AIADMK has faced a 'setback' is a 'fake information' spread deliberately. *—PTI*

Poll results 'moral defeat' for PM: Cong

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

Congress on Saturday claimed the mandate of Lok Sabha polls has been a "moral, political and personal" defeat for Prime Minister Narendra Modi and said efforts were now being made to justify his "pathetic" electoral performance.

BJP has won 240 seats in the just-concluded Lok Sabha polls, falling short of the halfway mark in the 543-member House, but the National Democratic Alliance together won 293 seats. The Congress has won 99 seats.

Congress General Secretary Jairam Ramesh said the drumbeat to find silver linings in the mandate that has been a "moral, political and personal" defeat for Modi has started. "It is being propagated that Modi is the first to receive a mandate thrice in a row after Jawaharlal Nehru. How leading a party to 240 seats and becoming an 'one-third' Pradhan Mantri is a mandate is not explained," the Congress leader said.

"Nehru, on the other hand, got 364 seats in 1952, 371 seats in 1957, and 361 seats in 1962 - a 2/3rd majority each time. Yet he remained a complete democrat, nurturing Parliament so very carefully with his constant presence," Ramesh said. Neither is Modi the only man since Nehru to be sworn in thrice - in a row or not, he said.

"The drumbeaters will look for anything to justify Modi's pathetic electoral performance in 2024," Ramesh said. *—PTI*

Naveen Patnaik PHOTO: PTI

PATNAIK LAUDS AIDE PANDIAN AMID ROW

BHUBANESWAR, 8 JUNE

BJD supremo Naveen Patnaik on Saturday said that criticism of his aide VK Pandian for the party's defeat in the Odisha assembly elections was unfortunate as he did an "excellent job".

The five-term Chief Minister, however, in the same breath, reiterated that Pandian, a bureaucrat-turned-politician hailing from Tamil Nadu, was not his successor and asserted that the people of Odisha would decide who his successor would be. Patnaik said he gracefully accepted defeat in the recently concluded assembly elections and would continue to serve the people of the state in whichever way possible. "There has been some criticism of Pandian. This is unfortunate. He joined the party and has not held any post. He did not contest the elections from any constituency. I have always clearly said when asked about my successor that it is not Pandian. I repeat again that the people of Odisha will decide my successor."

"As an officer, he (Pandian) did an excellent job in different fields in the last 10 years, be it during two cyclones or the Covid-19 pandemic. After this good work, he retired from the bureaucracy and joined the BJD and contributed largely by doing an excellent work. He is a person of integrity and honesty and should be remembered for that," Patnaik said. *—PTI*

WELCOMING THE GOVT

Students of Gurukul School of Art pose with their paintings of Prime Minister Narendra Modi ahead of his swearing-in ceremony, in Mumbai on Saturday
PHOTO: PTI

Slap dispute: Kangana slams those praising CISF officer

CHANDIGARH, 8 JUNE

Kangana on Saturday criticised people praising the CISF woman constable who allegedly slapped her, asking if they also justify "rape or murder".

In her video message, Ranaut said she was hit in the face and abused by a CISF constable, who appeared to be upset with the actor over her stance on the farmer protests, during security check at the Chandigarh airport.

"Remember if you are ok with breaking in to someone's intimate zone, without their permission touching their bodies and assaulting them then deep down you are ok with rape or murder also because that's also just penetration or stab only what big deal, you must look deeper in to your psychological criminal tendencies (sic)," she posted on X.

Cinema veteran Shabana Azmi came out in support of Kangana, saying security officials should not take law into their hands.

Punjab Kisan Cong seeks fair probe

Punjab Kisan Congress chief Kiranjit Singh on Saturday

Kangana Ranaut PHOTO: PTI

came out in support of the CISF woman constable who allegedly slapped actor and BJP MP-elect Kangana Ranaut, demanding an impartial probe into the matter.

He also lashed out at Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann for keeping mum on the incident.

The CISF, tasked with providing security at airports, has ordered a court of inquiry into the incident while the Mohali police has booked Kaur under Indian Penal Code Sections 323 and 341. Both are bailable offences.

"When there is no footage of slapping then why an FIR has been registered? There should be an impartial probe into the matter," he said. *—PTI*

MARATHA QUOTA ISSUE

Activist Jarange launches indefinite fast

JALNA, 8 JUNE

Maratha activist Manoj Jarange launched an indefinite fast on Saturday demanding implementation of the draft notification that recognises as Kunbis all blood relatives of Maratha community members.

He also sought framing of a law to identify Kunbis as Marathas, and warned of fielding candidates from all 288 assembly seats in Maharashtra in the upcoming state polls if his demands were not approved.

Jarange launched the fresh round of agitation at his native Antarwali Sarati village in Ambad tehsil of Maharashtra's Jalna district around 10.30am even as the district administration and the police authorities have denied permission for it.

He has been demanding Other Backward Community (OBC) tag for the Marathas

Maratha activist Manoj Jarange launched an indefinite fast
PHOTO: PTI

and implementation of the draft notification issued by the state government earlier this year for issuing certificates to blood relatives of eligible Kunbi Marathas.

Kunbi, an agrarian group, falls under the OBC category, and Jarange has been demanding that Kunbi certificates be issued to all Marathas, thus making them eligible for quota benefits.

"I will not give up until the Maratha reservation is granted," Jarange, the face of the quota agitation, asserted.

He accused the state government of trying to stall his protest by inciting the residents of Antarwali Sarati.

A section of villagers earlier submitted a memorandum to the district administration, urging it to not grant permission to Jarange's protest in the village, citing a potential threat to communal harmony.

Jarange urged Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis to address the Maratha reservation issue.

Jarange said the draft notification on the 'sage soyare' (blood relatives) of the Kunbi Marathas be implemented and a law should be framed to identify Kunbis as Marathas.

He said the Maratha community will hold Chief Minister Shinde and Deputy Chief Minister Fadnavis in high regard if the reservation demand is met. *—PTI*

'Old is gold': Ghosh posts cryptic message post polls

KOLKATA, 7 JUNE

After questioning the rationale behind relocating established leaders like him from winnable constituencies to challenging electoral battlegrounds, senior BJP leader Dilip Ghosh on Saturday put out a social media post, sparking speculations of 'old versus new' debate in the party's West Bengal unit.

In a cryptic message, Ghosh posted on X, "Old is Gold."

Ghosh had earlier said that it was mistake by the party to sideline old guards and the poll debacle was waiting to happen as newcomers and inexperienced leaders were calling the shots. BJP's Lok Sabha tally in the state dipped to 12 in this election from 18 in 2019, when Ghosh was the BJP state president. The saffron party had targeted to win 30 of the 42 seats this time. Ghosh was defeated at the hands of TMC's Kirti Azad by nearly 1.38 lakh votes in the Bardhaman-Durgapur seat.

Dilip Ghosh PHOTO: PTI

Ghosh had earlier said that it was now established that sending him to contest from his old constituency of Medinipur to a fresh one "was a mistake". He was relocated from his winning seat of Medinipur to Bardhaman-Durgapur, a seat where the battle against TMC was perceptively tough.

Ghosh replaced sitting MP SS Ahluwalia in Bardhaman-Durgapur. Ahluwalia, in turn, was moved to Asansol. The party's sitting MLA from Asansol Dakshin seat, Agnimitra Paul, replaced Ghosh in Medinipur. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Man attacks couple, kills infant at MP railway stn

DAMOH, 8 JUNE

An unidentified man attacked a couple and killed their two-and-half-month-old baby at Damoh railway station in Madhya Pradesh in the early hours of Saturday, the Government Railway Police (GRP) said.A case of murder has been registered in connection with the incident that occurred around 5am, said Mahesh Kori, in-charge of the GRP post.The complainant, Lekhram Adivasi, had travelled from Delhi on Gondwana Express with his wife and baby, he said.The official said the couple were heading to Madiadoh village but alighted at Damoh station as the infant was unwell, and they wanted to take him to the district hospital.Adivasi's wife was giving water to the baby when an unidentified man started hitting them, and the complainant picked up a brick from the spot to scare the attacker away, he said.The baby died in the attack, the official said. *—PTI*

Timber dealer's house raided in 2013 terror attack

SRINAGAR, 8 JUNE

The State Investigation Agency on Saturday raided the residence of a timber dealer in the old city here in connection with an 11-year-old terror attack in Sopore which left four policemen dead, officials said. The SIA sleuths carried out the searches at the residence of Ahmadullah Malla in the Nawab Bazar area of the city in the early hours and seized some material and documents, the officials said. They said the raid was carried out as part of the investigations into the April 2013 terror attack in the Hygam area of Sopore in Baramulla district. Four police personnel were killed in the attack when terrorists, waiting in an ambush, opened fire on them. *—PTI*

16 get lifer for killing man on suspicion of witchcraft in Bihar

AURANGABAD, 8 JUNE

A court in Bihar's Aurangabad district sentenced 16 people, including two women, to life imprisonment for killing a man on suspicion of practising witchcraft. The court of Additional District and Sessions Judge-II (Aurangabad), Dhananjay Mishra, on Friday, sentenced the 16 people and also imposed a fine of Rs 25,000 each for killing Jagdish Ram,65, a resident of Ibrahimpur village. The 16 people convicted belong to Ibrahimpur village. Additional Public Prosecutor, Rajaram Choudhary told reporters after the judgement that, "Jagdish Ram was killed by convicts on the suspicion that he was involved in 'witchcraft'. *—PTI*

6 booked in Thane for illegal cattle transportation

THANE, 8 JUNE

A case has been registered against six people for allegedly transporting cattle illegally in Maharashtra's Thane district, police said on Saturday. The police intercepted two tempos transporting buffaloes in cramped and inhumane conditions in Kalyan on Friday morning, an official from the MFC police station said. The drivers of both tempos did not have permits to transport cattle and could not furnish necessary medical certificates for the animals, he said. A first information report (FIR) has been registered under relevant provisions of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 and Maharashtra Animal Preservation Act, 1976, against six people, including the drivers, owners of the vehicles and persons who had purchased the cattle, the official aid. *—PTI*

Govt panel to review grace marks to 1.5K NEET aspirants

This is amid claims of inflation of marks and paper leaks

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

The education ministry has set up a four-member panel to review the grace marks awarded to more than 1,500 candidates in the NEET-UG medical entrance exam, the National Testing Agency (NTA) announced on Saturday.

The move comes amid allegations of inflation of marks leading to 67 candidates sharing first rank in the exam.

There have been calls from several quarters for a re-exam alleging that the grace marks awarded to make up for the loss of time at six exam centres have led to the inflation of marks and tampered with the chances of other candidates.

These centres are from Meghalaya, Bahadurgarh in Haryana, Dantewada and Balodh in Chhattisgarh, Surat in Gujarat and Chandigarh.

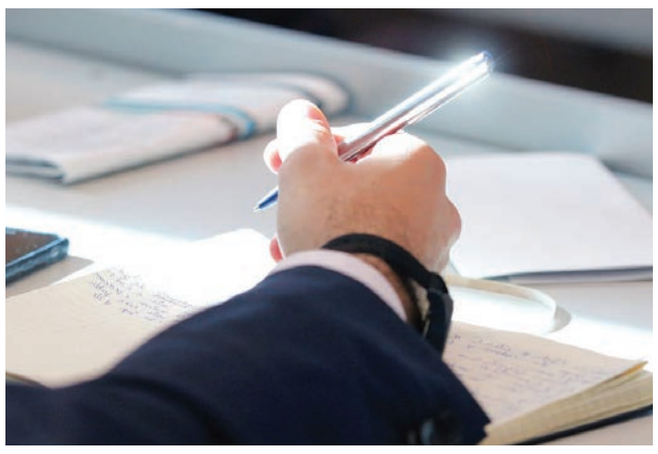
The result of the medical entrance exam was announced on 4 June. A record more than 24 lakh candidates had appeared for the exam this year.

"A high-powered committee has been set up to review the results of over 1,500 candidates. The four-member panel headed by a former UPSC chairman will submit its recommendations within a week and the results of these candidates might be revised," NTA Director General Subodh Kumar Singh said at a press conference here.

"The awarding of grace marks has not impacted the qualifying criteria of the exam and the review of results of the affected candidates will not impact the admission process," he added.

Asked about whether the exam will be re-conducted for certain students, the NTA DG said, it will be decided depending upon the committee's recommendations.

"The idea is to ensure that students who lost time or other students are not at any disadvantage," he said. *—PTI*



A record 24 lakh candidates had appeared for the exam this year
PHOTO: PIXABAY

M'RASHTRA SEEKS SCRAPING OF NEET, CITES INJUSTICE

MUMBAI, 8 JUNE

The Maharashtra government has sought immediate cancellation of the last month's NEET exam, alleging that its results have caused injustice to the students from the state.

Several aspirants of the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET-UG), conducted on 5 May at 4,750 centres in 571 cities, have earlier alleged that inflation of marks has led to a record 67 candidates bagging the top rank, including six from the same exam centre in Haryana. The results of the exam were declared on 4 June.

The National Testing Agency (NTA), however, denied any irregularities and said the changes made in the NCERT textbooks and grace marks for losing time at the examination centres are some of the reasons behind the students scoring higher marks. *—PTI*

MANIPUR CONTINUES TO BURN

People of violence-hit areas of Manipur at a relief camp set up by the Assam government, in Cachar district of Assam
PHOTO: PTI

200 evacuated as houses set on fire in Jiribam

IMPHAL, 8 JUNE

More than 200 people belonging to the Meitei community have been evacuated from their villages in Manipur's Jiribam district and moved to a newly set up relief camp after violence broke out following the killing of a man allegedly by militants, officials said Saturday.

The houses of the people staying in the relief camp at Jiri Sports Complex were burnt in the outlying villages of Lamtai khunou, Dibong Khunou, Nunkhal and Begra in the Jiribam district by suspected militants.

Most of the newly displaced people were staying in villages more than 30km from Jiribam town, an official said, adding "more security personnel have been rushed to the area."

The Manipur police have ordered state police commando personnel based in Imphal Valley to proceed to Jiribam on Saturday for duty with immediate effect.

Tension erupted in ethnic strife-torn Manipur's Jiribam district on Thursday evening after a 59-year-old man belonging to one community was killed allegedly by militants belonging to another, police said. *—PTI*

Naxalites kill 'police informer' in Chhattisgarh

The incident took place in Timdi village under Dhanora police station area on Friday
PHOTO: ANI

KONDAGAON, 8 JUNE

A man, who was acting as a police informer, was shot dead by Naxalites in Kondagaon district of Chhattisgarh, police said on Saturday.

The incident took place in Timdi village under Dhanora police station area on Friday night when the victim, identified as Dinesh Mandavi, was returning home after attending a wedding, a police official here said.

"As per the preliminary information, Naxalites fired at Mandavi, leaving him seriously injured and then escaped. He succumbed to injuries while being taken to hospital in Keshkal," he said.

Mandavi was acting as an informer for the Special Intelligence Branch of police, the official said.

Security personnel have launched a search in the area to trace the assailants, he said. *—PTI*

NIA chargesheets 7 more in 100kg narcotics haul case

New Delhi, 8 June

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has chargesheeted seven more accused in the sensational case of over 100-kilogram narcotics haul in Attari, an official statement said on Saturday. In its supplementary charge sheet filed on Friday before the Patiala House Court here, the probe agency identified the seven accused persons as key operatives in the international drug syndicate conspiracy related to the case. *—PTI*

Another accused held in Bangladesh MP murder case

KOLKATA, 8 JUNE

As part of its investigation into the murder of Bangladesh Awami League MP Anwarul Azim Anar, who was found dead at a flat in Kolkata, the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of West Bengal Police has arrested another prime accused, officials confirmed on Saturday.

The arrested accused, identified as Siam Hossain, originally hails from Burhanuddin, Bhola district in Bangladesh. Hossain had fled to Nepal following the murder of the victim Bangladesh MP.

PHOTO: PIXABAY

According to official sources, Siam Hossain was intercepted by a CID team in Bangaon of North 24 Parganas district near the India-Bangladesh border on Friday night. He is believed to be closely connected to the heinous crime that claimed the life of MP Anwarul Azim Anar in New Town, Kolkata.

While the main accused, Akhtaru Jaman Shaheen, remains at large, with reports suggesting he may be hiding in America, CID and the Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police are actively collaborating to gather crucial details for the investigation. Interpol has been approached to assist in locating Shaheen.

Meanwhile, CID is continuing its interrogation of Jihad Howlader, who has been dubbed "the butcher" in this case. It has been revealed that the recently apprehended Siam Hossain allegedly provided the tools used in the crime to Howlader.

CID is set to produce the arrested accused, Siam Hossain, before the Barasat Court on Saturday to seek remand for further investigation. *—ANI*

LAW STUDENT DIES AFTER BEING HIT BY STONE IN HP

SOLAN, 8 JUNE

A 19-year-old student of National Law University, Delhi, died after he was hit by a shooting stone in Himachal Pradesh's Solan district, police said on Saturday.

The deceased has been identified as Akshat Dev, a resident of Gandhinagar in Rajasthan's Jaipur district. The mishap took place on Friday evening when a group of 13 students of the National Law University had come to Ashwani Khad from where they went towards the waterfall.While they were enjoying at the waterfall, a stone fell from the cliff and hit Akshat on his head leaving him unconscious due to excessive loss of blood. He was rushed to the Government Regional Hospital, Solan, where he was declared brought dead. *—PTI*

Won't react to personal remark: Priest on Kerala CM's 'ignorant' comment

T'PURAM, 8 JUNE

A day after Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan termed as "ignorant" a priest who criticised the ruling Left on Facebook for their defeat in the Lok Sabha polls, the cleric on Saturday said he never reacted to "personal comments".

Geevarghese Coorilos -former Metropolitan of Niranam Diocese of the Malankara Jacobite Syriac Orthodox Church -- in his post said that "floods and epidemics do not always come to the rescue and people in Kerala will not fall more than once in 'kit politics."

The priest, known for his pro-Left views, had made the remarks on Facebook in connection with the LDF's loss in the LS polls.

Hitting back, the Chief Minister on Friday had said that the priest's post shows "that even among priests there are sometimes some ignorant people".

On Saturday, when reporters asked the priest as to why he had put up the post, Coorilos said he has nothing to say on the matter as all that he had to say he has mentioned in his Facebook page and it is still there.

"That topic is closed. I have said what I had to say on the issue. I am not going to say anything more," he said.

When his reaction was sought to the Chief Minister's remark calling him "ignorant", the priest said, "I have never reacted to personal remarks and that is not going to happen ever".

He also made it clear that his heart was always with the Left front and it shall continue to be so.

Coorilos, in his social media post, had also said that one of the main reasons for the LDF's defeat in the Lok Sabha polls was the anti-incumbency sentiment among the people. *—PTI*

Pinarayi Vijayan
PHOTO: PTI

- The priest, known for his pro-Left views, had made the remarks on Facebook in connection with the LDF's loss in the LS polls

200 BOOKED

57 held for stone-pelting in Mumbai during anti-encroachment drive

MUMBAI, 8 JUNE

The Mumbai police have registered a case against more than 200 people and apprehended 57 of them in connection with the incident of stone-pelting that occurred during the civic body's anti-encroachment drive in the city's Powai area two days ago, an official said.

At least 15 police personnel, five civic engineers and an equal number of labourers were injured in the stone-pelting during the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's drive in Jai Bhim Nagar slum on Thursday."The police have filed a case against 200 people and apprehended 57 of them on the charge of obstructing public servants from discharging their duty and rioting in connection with the stone-pelting at police and BMC officials.

They were remanded in judicial custody," the official said on Friday.The BMC earlier said temporary huts had come up on a plot in Powaigaon and Mauje Tirandaj village and the State Human Right Commission had directed the civic body to take action against these structures.

According to an official, the civic anti-encroachment team had gone there to clear allegedly illegal structures, which number around 400 on an open plot, along with a posse of police personnel for security, but residents started protesting claiming they had been living there for the past 25 years.

A video of the stone-pelting incident went viral on social media. It showed men and women throwing stones and police and civic staff running for cover. *—PTI*

Workers shift belongings during an anti-encroachment drive at Jai Bhim Nagar slum colony, Powai, in Mumbai
PHOTO: PTI

Dubai flight diverted to Kochi due to bad weather

Kochi, 8 June

An Air India Express flight from Dubai to Calicut airport was diverted to Kochi in the small hours of Saturday due to bad weather conditions in Kozhikode, airline sources said. AI Express flight with 173 passengers landed at Cochin International Airport here at 2.47am. It departed from Kochi to Calicut airport at around 9.30am after nearly seven hours, according to the sources. *—PTI*

Heavy rainfall and gusty wind speed reaching up to 40 kmph is expected at one or two places
PHOTO: PTI

IMD issues orange alert for five Kerala districts

T'PURAM, 8 JUNE

With Kerala continuing to receive incessant rains due to the Southwest monsoon, the India Meteorological Department on Saturday issued an 'orange alert' for five districts in the state predicting very heavy rains there.

The southern district of Pathanamthitta and northern districts of Kozhikode Wayanad, Kannur and Kasaragod were placed under the orange alert for the day, according to the latest IMD update.The weather agency also issued a 'yellow alert' for eight districts of the state, warning of heavy rains in Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Alappuzha, Kottayam, Idukki, Ernakulam, Thrissur and Malappuram.

A red alert indicates heavy to extremely heavy rain of over 20cm in 24 hours, while an orange alert means very heavy rain of 11cm to 20cm, and a yellow alert means heavy rainfall between 6 cm and 11cm.As heavy rains pose potential hazards, the Kerala State Disaster Management Authority (KSDMA) has advised people to be vigilant. *—PTI*

WORLD OCEANS DAY

Students of School of Marine Sciences (Cochin University of Science and Technology), in collaboration with Ocean Society of India, take part in a beach cleanliness drive on 'World Oceans Day' at Puthuvype Beach, in Kochi
PHOTO: PTI

DID FARMERS DITCH MODI AND BJP IN LS ELECTION?

As the results of elections became clear on Tuesday, Narendra Dabhane felt a sense of achievement and relief.

The farmer from Maharashtra's Yavatmal was once an ardent admirer of BJP leader Narendra Modi, who had promised to address the struggles of farmers, including farm debt, in the Vidarbha region. Modi had even visited Dabhane's village of Dabhadi during his 2014 campaign to first become prime minister. The village was handpicked out of the 15,000 villages in the Vidarbha region for Modi's outreach to farmers in 2014.

But after 10 years of Modi's rule, those crises have deepened. So, in February, when Modi was visiting Yavatmal, Dabhane wanted to meet the Prime Minister to express his disappointment. The police, though, detained him and did not allow his protests. He was released after Modi left.

Yet, on Tuesday, when the results showed a dramatic fall in the BJP's seat tally from Maharashtra, Dabhane felt vindicated. The party, which in 2019 had won 23 seats in the country's second-most politically consequential state – Maharashtra sends 48 legislators to the lower house of India's parliament, behind only Uttar Pradesh state – secured only nine seats this time around. Its National Democratic Alliance, which won 41 seats in 2019, got only 17 in 2024. It is a pattern that appears to have played out across many key farm belts in India. Nationally, BJP lost its majority after a decade of dominance, winning 240 seats in a house of 543, compared with 303 in 2019. An early analysis of the results suggests that millions of rural voters like Dabhane in some of the largest food-producing states of India dumped BJP this time. In Haryana, known as India's bread basket, where the BJP won 10 out of 10 seats on offer in 2019, its tally was slashed to five this time, with the opposition Congress winning the other five. The BJP drew a blank in Punjab, one of the top producers of rice and wheat in the country. In Rajasthan, where the BJP won the state government only last December, it won 14 seats out of 25 – it had won all 25 in 2019. Amraram, a farmer leader from the Communist Party of India (Marxist), won against the BJP's incumbent MP, banking on farm issues and anger among farmers towards the Modi government, in a seat where the left had never won before. And in Uttar Pradesh, where 65 percent of the population is dependent on agriculture, the BJP won just 33 seats out of 80, down from 62 in 2019 and 71 in 2014. Nationally, the NDA witnessed a 2.2 percent drop in its vote share in rural areas, according to an analysis by The Hindu newspaper, a national daily in India. Meanwhile, the opposition Congress-led INDIA alliance's rural and semi-rural area vote share rose by nearly 18 percent."If you see the results, it is clear that one of the major reasons for BJP's poor performance in rural areas is this anger among farmers towards Modi and the BJP," said Punjab-based Devinder Sharma, an agricultural scientist and widely respected farm analyst.

In February, police used tear gas on protesting farmers near the Punjab-Haryana Shambhu Border
PHOTO: PTI

What's behind the farm anger?

Government data shows that from 2018 to 2022, as many as 53,478 farmers took their own lives, crushed by unending debt, poor remuneration for their produce and erratic weather patterns – all factors made only worse by the Modi government's farm policies, experts said.

In the Vidarbha region, the crisis has only ballooned since Modi came to power. Under the previous Congress-led government, the region saw 9,671 farmers taking their own lives between 2004 and 2014, according to data shared by the Divisional Commissionerate of Amravati. Under Modi, suicides rose to 10,122 between January 2015 to December 2023. When Modi first came to power in 2014, he had promised to reform the agriculture sector and double farm income. Farmers, though, continue to live in penury, with farmers earning an annual average of Rs 10,218, or a daily income of just Rs 28, government data from 2022 shows. Modi's government pushed through three controversial new laws to regulate agriculture in 2020, without any consultations with farmers' groups. The step triggered a massive yearlong protest by farmers, who feared that these laws would usher in greater corporatisation of Indian agriculture and would lead to the government scrapping state-backed protections for them, like a minimum support price and the procurement of farm produce by state agencies.

The government eventually rolled those laws back, but only after cracking down on protests by arresting farmers, barricading highways to stop them from coming to the capital New Delhi, firing shotguns and pellets, as well as using drones to drop tear gas on unarmed farmers.

Farmers took to the streets again in February to demand legal guarantees of a minimum support price (MSP) for crops among others. But talks with government officials remained inconclusive.

A galvanised community

Experts like Sharma believe the protests galvanised the country's farmers into political action. In Punjab, for instance, farmers face issues like a drop in land productivity, along with rising costs eating into their profits. The recent protest movements gave farmers a platform to organise themselves politically and raise their concerns collectively, said Sharma. In states like Punjab and Haryana, furious farmers, angry with the BJP government for disallowing their protest march to Delhi, staged protests against BJP candidates when they came to campaign ahead of the election. Some villages barred BJP candidates from entering.

Incumbent MP and BJP leader Preneet Kaur, who fought – and lost – from the city of Patiala in Punjab, confessed that the state was seeing a "farmers vs BJP" contest.

It is not a phenomenon that was limited to Punjab. Vaibhav Pandit from Maharashtra's Vidarbha region, is a farmer and a lawyer who works with other young farmers in the Yavatmal district, known for its cotton production. But cotton prices have declined over the last year, and the state-mandated MSP, at Rs 6,620 for a quintal, is just not enough to make farming sustainable and should be raised to at least Rs 10,000, say farmers.

—Courtesy, Al Jazeera

SALAR سالار

Israel's act on Rafah proves courts can't protect civilians

The world has reacted with anger this week after an Israeli air strike on a safe zone for displaced civilians in southern Gaza reportedly resulted in the deaths of at least 45 people, including women and children.

This latest action in the Israel's war in Gaza has come despite the International Court of Justice (ICJ) delivering an order last on Friday that it must immediately halt its military campaign in Rafah due to the risk to civilians.

It appears Israel is determined to defy the ICJ's order. Israeli tanks moved into the heart of Rafah earlier this week.

If it continues its assault on Rafah, it would present the ICJ (the UN's top court) with perhaps the greatest challenge to its legitimacy since it was established following the second world war.

There is a large amount of legal ambiguity in the wording of this order.

In one interpretation – favoured by the Israeli government – military and other actions in Rafah can continue, provided these actions are not genocidal.

In another interpretation, the order prohibits Israel from carrying out any further military or other actions in Rafah full-stop.

There's also a question over how to interpret the word may. That is, at what point can it be said that Israel's actions may lead to physical destruction?

While the order is ambiguous from a legal standpoint, arguably it is not to many observers: the court wants Israel to stop what it is doing.

The lack of enforcement

It is likely no accident the panel of judges provided such ambiguous orders.

The ICJ is an independent court, but it operates in a difficult political and diplomatic environment. Critically, it also has no independent ability to enforce its orders – there is no world police the ICJ can rely on to ensure its orders are carried out.

Instead, the court relies on the support of powerful countries that are willing to enforce its decisions through diplomatic measures, including sanctions.

Officially, the UN Security Council – as the global body responsible for peace and security – enforces ICJ decisions. However, in practical terms, the veto power of the five permanent members of the Security Council extends to the ICJ. As such, the United States would likely veto any Security Council resolution to restrict Israeli actions in any substantive way. While the US has warned Israel not to launch a major offensive in Rafah, a senior administration official has reportedly said this week's air strike did not cross a "red line".

This kind of roadblock to the enforcement of the ICJ's orders threatens the legitimacy and credibility of the court. To exist as a trusted adjudicator in international law, it has to be seen to be applying that law impartially and fairly. And its rulings cannot be ignored.

The court alone can't stop the fighting

In the past, the effective pursuit of states and individuals for breaches of international humanitarian law has required overwhelming political will, usually in the wake of the complete military defeat of a country at war.

This was the case with the Nuremberg and Tokyo war crimes trials following the second world war, and in other international trials since then. In these past cases, the nations and leaders in question were powerless to resist the overwhelming pressure of the international community.

When it comes to allegations of genocide and other breaches of international law, it is also much easier for judges on international courts and tribunals to make decisions after the events have occurred, rather than while they are still continuing, as in the Gaza war.

A government that legitimately holds power is likely to regard the orders of an international body as an encroachment on its sovereignty, as Israel does with the current orders of the ICJ and International Criminal Court.

Ultimately, what the conflict in Gaza and the various legal and political responses have shown is that no court in the world – nor any international law – alone has the capacity to effectively protect civilians during times of war. Legal thinkers can debate the wording of the ICJ's latest order, and political leaders can debate the power of the court, but the only thing that can end the war is widespread international pressure for both sides to agree to a ceasefire. This includes from powerful nations such as the US. Thus, it is not the legitimacy of the ICJ that is most urgently in question at the moment, but rather how deeply the world's most influential powers believe in the role of international institutions to maintain peace and security.

—Courtesy, The Conversation

Israel's assault on Gaza has killed over 36,730 Palestinians
PHOTO: THE CONVERSATION

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Neuroscience explains why voting is so often driven by emotion

The British electorate has been more volatile than ever in recent years. The elections of 2015 and 2017 saw the highest number of voters switching parties in modern history. And current polling suggests we're about to see more of the same.

Understanding what's happening in people's brains when they are making decisions helps us understand why certain political messages appeal to them and why they might decide to switch parties.

Political scientists talk about Pedersen volatility, named after the distinguished Danish scholar Mogens N Pedersen. There is a forbidding mathematical equation for this, but it all amounts to "the net change within the electoral party system resulting from individual vote transfers".

In plain English, volatility is simply the number of people who change party in an election. In late 1960s Britain, the Pedersen index stood at just over 10 per cent, now it is closer to 40 per cent.

There has been much talk about the increased use of social media and its influence on election outcomes. A recent study by Professor Hanspeter Kreisi, a Swiss election expert, reported that "a steady stream of argument and voting cues [are] allowing voters to make enlightened choices that are in line with their preferences".

This might well be true, but a recent study found that while politicians post more on social media during election campaigns, overall the number of posts with policy content is lower not higher.

One of the more interesting developments in electoral studies is that we are now able to use social neuroscience methods to understand voting behaviour.

In the past decade, neuroscience has enabled us to identify the parts of the brain that get activated when you watch political adverts. What these results show is that most people are driven by fear and emotion rather than by rational argument in election campaigns.

In practice, this means that voters are more susceptible to messages that stress the negative rather then the positive. Researchers found that negative images and statements about products led to heightened activity in the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, which is also associated with decision making.

For example, negative information about a brand of cola made subjects more likely to buy the competing brand. However, when this experiments was repeated with political parties rather than soft drinks, the negative effect was three times higher. Negative political advertising works, and we now have the fMRI scans to prove it.

In the past decade, neuroscience has enabled us to identify the parts of the brain that get activated when you watch political adverts. What these results show is that most people are driven by fear and emotion
PHOTO: PTI

Politics is a bare-knuckle fight, and our brains reflect that. Evolution has conditioned us to be driven by fear when we are under threat. We want to survive above all.

By playing on our fear and anger, those who devise election slogans are producing – perhaps deliberately – messaging that triggers parts of the brain associated with revenge and pent up rage, including the so-called anterior cingulate cortex (or ACC), deep in the front part of the fissure that separates the two brain-hemispheres. So, if I am furious that Rishi Sunak has not brought NHS waiting lists down, it is likely that the ACC has gone into overdrive.

Older people – who tend to vote in higher numbers – are particularly interesting here. This is because as we age, we become more prone to activating the so-called dorsolateral prefrontal cortex – an area of the brain associated with caution.

It is unlikely that Rishi Sunak has delved into the finer points of neuropolitics but his strategy is consistent with what we know from social neuroscience. His emphasis on need to "stick to the plan" and not gamble on the opposition appeals to those with oversensitive dorsolateral prefrontal cortices – namely the older voter cohort he most needs to convince.

But more broadly, people of all ages have a strong tendency to activate the amygdala – a part of the brain associated with fear.

Only rarely do we activate the parts of the brain associated with ethical evaluation such as the so-called ventromedial prefrontal cortex.

No wonder the two main parties in the British election are focusing on fear and caution. Maybe Machiavelli got it right when he observed that voters are "avoiders of danger"?

Appealing to this fear, we see Rishi Sunak repeatedly warning in a very unspecified way that the world is more "dangerous" than ever.

And clearly realising that voters respond to promises of security, the two parties are labelling policies as a "triple lock", be it on pensions or the nuclear deterrent.

The age of economic voting

The other rich seam of academic research on why voters change their minds relates to the knowledge that since the 1970s or so, voters have been more prone to base their decisions on macroeconomic performance. Thus, political parties that have presided over significant financial downturns get blamed.

This explains why the Conservatives lost in 1992 and Labour lost in 1979. Voters even change their minds based on recent economic performance even if the economic downturn is beyond the control of the government, as was the case for former Conservative prime minister Edward Heath, who lost power after the 1973 oil crisis (precipitated by a war in the Middle East). Once a government has been associated with economic ills – increases in mortgage rates, cost of living and the like – they get blamed even if the economy is in recovery.

The current government's slogan that the plan is working might be economically correct, but history suggests it will not prevent voters from changing parties.

—Courtesy, The Conversation

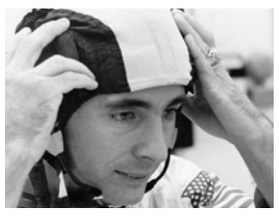


PHOTO: NASA

Nasa 'Earthrise' astronaut dies at 90 in plane crash

NEW YORK, 8 JUNE

Apollo 8 astronaut Bill Anders, who snapped one of the most famous photographs taken in outer space, has died in a plane crash at the age of 90. Officials say a small aircraft he was flying crashed into the sea off Washington state. Anders' son Greg confirmed that his father's body was recovered on Friday afternoon. "The family is devastated. He was a great pilot. He will be missed," a statement reads. Anders - who was a lunar module pilot on the Apollo 8 mission - took the iconic Earthrise photograph, one of the most memorable and inspirational images of Earth from space. Taken on Christmas Eve during the 1968 mission, the first crewed space flight to leave Earth and reach the Moon, the picture shows the planet rising above the horizon from lunar surface. *—BBC*

Hunter Biden trial judge spent her career in civil law

NEW YORK, 8 JUNE

The judge presiding over Hunter Biden's federal gun trial in Delaware is a former corporate civil lawyer with a background in biology who was nominated to the bench by the Biden family's chief political antagonist: former President Donald Trump. But even while that might raise partisan eyebrows and questions of political pressure in the highly watched case, District Judge Maryellen Noreika was recommended for the bench by the two Democratic senators. She has a brief history of political donations to both parties — mostly Republicans — and had not worked on criminal cases or presided over a courtroom before getting the nod as a federal judge. The New York Times reported she was registered to vote as a Democrat from 2000-2020 until changing her registration to no party affiliation. *—AP*

Violent protests continue in Pak, 20 injured, 45 arrested

CHAMAN, 8 JUNE

Chaman, a border town in Pakistan's Balochistan, remains in turmoil as violent protests and clashes between protesters and law enforcement agencies continued for a third consecutive day, resulting in injuries to 20 people, including eight security personnel, and the arrest of 45 individuals, as reported by Dawn. The protest and clash incidents have also forced the suspension of passenger train services between Quetta and Chaman due to security concerns. Despite assurances from tribal elders, protesters expanded their demonstrations beyond designated areas, targeting public and private properties while wielding sticks and stones. *—ANI*

Pak teacher held for raping 2 minor boys

MUZAFFARGARH, 8 JUNE

The police have arrested a seminary teacher for allegedly raping his two minor students and threatening them with dire consequences if they disclosed the assault, Dawn reported. According to Daira Din Pannah police, the complainant, Jalal Din, said in his application that his son and a nephew, aged between 10-12 years, have studied at Madressah Yaseen at Chak No 143/ML for the past few months. He added that boys told him that their teacher raped them at the seminary and also threatened to torture them if they told anybody about what happened. On the complaint, the police lodged a case against the suspect under section 376-iii, 377-B. The police added they had arrested the suspect, adding that the boys had been sent to hospital for a medical examination, as per' Dawn's report. *—ANI*

9 months of war: Israel bombs Gaza refugee camps

Israeli strikes kill at least 18 a day after attack on UN-run school

TEL AVIV, 8 JUNE

Israeli strikes hammered a Gaza refugee camp on Friday, after a deadly strike on a UN-run school there, as the war sparked by Hamas's unprecedented attack on Israel entered its ninth month. The conflict has killed thousands, laid waste to much of the Gaza Strip, uprooted most of its 2.4 million population and put them at risk of starvation.

Diplomatic efforts to mediate the first ceasefire since a week-long pause in November appear to have stalled, only a week after US President Joe Biden offered a new three-stage roadmap. Hamas has yet to respond to Biden's proposal. Israel has expressed openness to discussions while insisting on pursuing its war aim of destroying the Palestinian Islamist group.

Strikes across Gaza

A day after the UN-run school was struck, eyewitnesses said the Nuseirat refugee camp came under attack again as Gaza faced Israeli attacks from land, sea, and air. The strike killed at least 18 people.

Palestinians look at the aftermath of the Israeli strike on a UN-run school that killed dozens of people in Nusseirat refugee camp in Gaza *PHOTO: PTI*

- Diplomatic efforts to mediate the first ceasefire since November appear to have stalled,a week after US President Joe Biden offered a new three-stage roadmap

Source at Al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital said the Isa family home in the Bureij refugee camp was targeted, wounding several people. Witnesses also confirmed Israeli strikes east of Deir Al-Balah, as well as intensive fire from army vehicles near the Bureij camp, where a blaze was raging.

The Israeli military said it "eliminated dozens of terrorists" in eastern Bureij and eastern Deir Al-Balah, and was continuing operations in the southern city of Rafah.

Six people were killed and several wounded in an Israeli strike on the Wafati home in Maghazi camp, said a source at Al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital. Fighter jets targeted the Al-Sultan neighbourhood of Rafah, sources in the city on the border with Egypt said.

Osama al-Kahlut of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society said "occupation forces and snipers" east of Deir al-Balah were firing on people along Gaza's main thoroughfare. "Gunfire on Salaheddin Street has severely restricted people's movement, and several wounded people have been evacuated from the area," he told AFP.

Egypt's state-linked Al-Qahera news quoted a high-level source on Thursday saying Cairo had "received positive signs from the Palestinian movement signalling its aspiration for a ceasefire." However, the Beirut-based senior Hamas official Osama Hamdan later cast doubt on the proposal, calling it "just words." Qatar's foreign ministry spokesman said on Thursday that Hamas has not yet given its response to the truce plan.

—Courtesy, Le Monde

MAN ARRESTED

Danish PM attacked by man in Copenhagen

COPENHAGEN, 8 JUNE

Denmark Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen is said to have been left shocked and suffering whiplash after being struck by a man while walking in the centre of Copenhagen.

The assault took place in a square in the city's old town when a man walked up to the politician and hit her. The attacker was swiftly arrested, but there is no word yet on a motive.

European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen called it a "despicable act, which goes against everything we believe in and fight for in Europe". The attack on another European leader comes less than a month after Slovak PM Robert Fico was shot several times as he greeted supporters. He survived and has since undergone surgery. Two witnesses - Marie Adrian and Anna Ravn - described the Copenhagen assault to the local newspaper BT, saying: "A man came by in the opposite direction and gave her a hard shove on the shoulder, causing her to fall to the side."

Mette Frederiksen *PHOTO: AP/PTI*

Frederiksen's office said that the incident had left the politician "shocked" and that she was suffering "minor whiplash". A 39-year-old man is due to appear at a hearing at the Frederiksberg Courthouse on Saturday afternoon in connection with the incident.

The attack comes two days before Denmark votes in the EU election. Frederiksen, leader of Denmark's Social Democrats, had earlier taken part in a European election event with her party's lead candidate Christel Schaldemose. *—BBC News*

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif with Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing *PHOTO: AP/PTI*

Pak PM, China President agree to upgrade CPEC

ISLAMABAD, 8 JUNE

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chinese President Xi Jinping in their meeting have affirmed consensus on the upgradation of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and advancing high-quality development of the multi-billion-dollar project in the second phase.

The two leaders held an in-depth discussion at the historic Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Friday during the five-day official visit of Sharif which began on 4 June.

The two leaders were accompanied by the ministers and senior officials. This was the first meeting of Sharif with President Xi since assuming office in 2024. According to the state media, the two leaders showed consensus on up-gradation of the CPEC and advancing the development of the mega project in the second phase.

The CPEC, which connects Gwadar Port in Pakistan's Balochistan with China's Xinjiang province, is the flagship project of China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The BRI is seen as an attempt by China to further its influence abroad with infrastructure projects funded by Chinese investments across the world.

China has also invested billions in various power projects and road networks in Pakistan under the USD 65 billion CPEC plan.

Associated Press of Pakistan reported that Prime Minister Sharif briefed President Xi on Pakistan's policies for economic reform and sustained growth, industrial development, agricultural modernisation and regional connectivity and the critical role played by the CPEC in Pakistan's development. *—PTI*

Lanka makes 'strong progress' on debt restructuring front: IMF

COLOMBO, 8 JUNE

Sri Lanka's macroeconomic policy reforms have started to "bear fruit" and the country is expected to reach agreements with external commercial creditors soon, the IMF has said ahead of the second review of it's USD 2.9 billion bailout programme to the cash-strapped country.

Addressing a press conference on Friday, International Monetary Fund (IMF) Communication Department Director Julie Kozack asserted that Sri Lanka has made "sufficiently strong progress on the debt restructuring front".

She said that the island nation's programme performance is "strong", with most quantitative and structural conditionality for the second review met or implemented with delay, adding that reforms are still ongoing in some areas.

The second review of the IMF's Extended Fund Facility under the USD 2.9 billion bailout of Sri Lanka has been set for 12 June. Kozack confirmed that the IMF's Executive Board will meet to discuss the second review and the Article IV Consultation.

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

- IMFCommunication Department Director Julie Kozack asserted that Sri Lanka has made "sufficiently strong progress on the debt restructuring front"

Julie Kozack *PHOTO: X/@IMFSPOKESPERSON*

Under Article IV of the IMF's Articles of Agreement, the global lender holds bilateral discussions with members, typically every year, with a staff team visiting the country, collecting economic and financial information, and discussing with officials the country's economic developments and policies.

"In Sri Lanka, we do see macroeconomic policy reform starting to bear fruit," Kozack said, adding that "commendable outcomes" include rapid disinflation, robust reserve accumulation, and initial signs of economic growth while preserving the financial system's stability. She said that Colombo's next steps on debt restructuring are to conclude negotiations with external commercial creditors and implement agreements in principle with the official creditors. *—PTI*

Raisi's crash shows Tehran's reliance on aging fleet

DUBAI, 8 JUNE

By the time Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi boarded his window seat on a helicopter ferrying him, the foreign minister and six others, thick clouds already had begun forming around the mountaintops along the Azerbaijan-Iran border.

Despite the worsening weather, the helicopter lifted off for a trip about 145 kilometres southwest to a new oil pipeline near Tabriz. Within an hour, the Bell 212 helicopter had crashed into a cloud-covered mountainside.

While the cause of the 19 May crash remains unknown, the sudden death of the hardline protege of Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei exposed the contradictions and challenges facing the country's Shiite theocracy.

The Iranian military investigators probing the crash have previously faced international criticism over their report on troops shooting down a Ukrainian airliner in 2020. The hours long desperate rescue attempt after the helicopter crash saw Tehran even reach out to the United States for help, just weeks after launching an unprecedented attack on Israel and as it enriches uranium closer than ever to weapons-grade levels. Even the type of helicopter that crashed links back to Iranian history, both before and after the country's 1979 Islamic Revolution.

"Iran is a culture of dualities," said Farzin Nadimi, a senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near-East Policy who studies Iran's military. "Some aspects, they seem so good and well-managed, well-oiled and very capable. ... In many levels, it's quite lacking." *—AP*

Ebrahim Raisi *PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA*

Macron is hosting Biden for state visit

PARIS, 8 JUNE

President Joe Biden is being feted by French President Emmanuel Macron with a state visit Saturday, as the two allies aim to show off their partnership on global security issues and move past trade tensions.

Biden and Macron attended ceremonies marking the 80th anniversary of D-Day on Thursday. They met separately the following day with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Paris — engagements they both used to underscore the urgent need to support Kyiv's fight against Russia's invasion. But Macron and Biden have often chafed at the pace of support for Ukraine, especially as the US — by far the largest contributor to Kyiv's defence— was forced to pause aid shipments for months while congressional Republicans held up an assistance package.

US President Joe Biden and French President Emmanuel Macron stand in front of the Tomb of the Unknown soldier during a ceremony *PHOTO: AP/PTI*

The state visit will begin with a welcome ceremony at the Arc de Triomphe and a military parade along the Champs-Élysées leading to the Élysée Palace, where the two will hold official meetings and deliver public statements.

Biden hosted Macron in December 2022 at the White House for the first state visit of his presidency — a glamorous affair that included business and political figures after the Covid-19 pandemic. First lady Jill Biden will join her husband for the Saturday events, returning to France aboard a government plane after spending Friday in Delaware to support their son, Hunter Biden, who is standing trial on federal gun charges. *—AP*

BODIES OF 4 STUDENTS WHO DROWNED IN RUSSIAN RIVER BEING FLOWN TO INDIA

JALGAON, 8 JUNE

Russian authorities have recovered bodies of all the four Indian students who drowned in the Volkhov river, a Maharashtra Government official said. "While two bodies were found within the first two days of the 4 June incident, Russian officials said two more were recovered this morning," Jalgaon district collector Ayush Prasad said. The bodies are being flown to Mumbai and will be later taken to the students' native places in Jalgaon, official said.

While Harshal Anantrao Desale, Jishan Ashpak Pinjari, Jia Firoj Pinjari and Malik Gulamgous Mohammad Yakub drowned, another student Nisha Bhupesh Sonawane survived. All were aged between 18 and 20. They were studying at Yaroslav-the-Wise Novgorod State University. The students were on a walk along the Volkhov river, when they entered the waters, an official said. Jishan Pinjari was on a video call with his parents when he and three others drowned, a family member said. *—PTI*

UK ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

Sunak's D-Day departure is just the latest in a long line of gaffes

LONDON, 8 JUNE

The decision by British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak to leave D-Day commemorations in northern France early has caused a political storm that threatens to derail his Conservative Party's general election campaign. Though Sunak apologized for not attending Thursday's final commemoration on Omaha Beach in Normandy.

Campaign gaffes are regular features of British elections. Some have more impact than others. Here are a few that have lit up campaigns in recent decades:

1983

Following the Falklands War in 1982 in which British forces sailed thousands of miles to the South Atlantic to expel invading Argentine troops, Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was riding high and was widely expected to win the general election she called for June 1983.

Thatcher won a landslide and remained in power until 1990 when she was ousted by lawmakers in her own party.

1992

After 1983's big defeat, the Labour Party sought, under the leadership of Neil Kinnock, to move back to the centre ground, where historically elections are won.

By the time the election was called for April 1992 by John Major, who replaced Thatcher, Labour was contending again.

Britain's Prince William with Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and his wife Akshata Murty, during D-Day event in England *PHOTO: PTI*

With a week or so to go before the elections, opinion polls were moving in favour of Labour, if not quite winning then becoming the biggest party.

2001

With Tony Blair's Labour Party widely expected to be re-elected by a big margin, akin to the one it achieved four years earlier.

The election took place a month later than Blair had planned in June 2001 as a result of an outbreak of foot and mouth disease. The incident threatened to derail Labour's campaign, but Blair managed to defuse its impact at the following morning's press conference.

2010

Blair's successor Gordon Brown didn't have his predecessor's natural communications skills and that was particularly evident in the election campaign of 2010. Brown's ratings — and Labour's — had collapsed in the wake of the global financial crisis and the party, in power since 1997, faced losing to the Conservatives.

With barely a week to go to the May election, 65-year-old Gillian Duffy quizzed Brown while he was canvassing over the state of the economy and the party's immigration policies.

2017

Theresa May, who succeeded Cameron after he resigned following Britain's vote to leave the European Union in a referendum in June 2016, sought to capitalise on the Conservative Party's big opinion poll lead and called an early general election for June 2017.

Her hope was that a big majority would help her face down critics — both within her ranks and the Opposition — in the upcoming Brexit discussions with the EU. *—PTI*

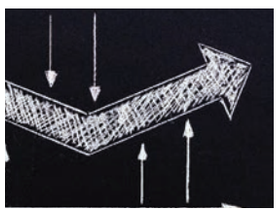


PHOTO: FREEPIK

Premier Roadlines profit grows to ₹12.62 cr in FY24

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

Transportation company Premier Roadlines has reported a 75 per cent rise in its profit to Rs 12.62 crore for FY24, driven by higher revenues. It had posted a profit of 7.19 crore for the year-ago period, the company said in an exchange filing on Friday. The company's revenues rose to Rs 228.54 crore from Rs 191.92 crore in the preceding 2022-23 fiscal. Expenses during the fiscal stood at Rs 211.64 crore against Rs 182.37 crore a year ago. Premier Roadlines Limited serves multinationals, and small and medium enterprises for all logistics requirements.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Bajaj Housing files papers for ₹7,000 cr IPO

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

Bajaj Housing Finance has filed preliminary papers with capital markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to raise Rs 7,000 crore through an initial public offering (IPO). The proposed IPO comprises a fresh issue of equity shares of up to Rs 4,000 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) of equity shares worth Rs 3,000 crore by parent Bajaj Finance, according to the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP). The share sale is being conducted to comply with the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) regulations, which require upper-layer non-banking finance companies to be listed on stock exchanges by September 2025. Proceeds from the fresh issue will be used to augment the company's capital base to meet future capital requirements. Bajaj Housing Finance is a non-deposit-taking housing finance company registered with the National Housing Bank since September 2015. It offers financial solutions for purchasing and renovating residential and commercial properties. It has been identified and categorised as an "upper layer" NBFC by the RBI in India, and its comprehensive mortgage products include home loans, loans against property, lease rental discounting and developer financing. *—PTI*

K'taka tops UK's investment flows from India: Report

K'taka brought the 2nd highest amount of FDI into the UK at 12%

LONDON, 8 JUNE

Karnataka is one of the top three states bringing in foreign direct investment (FDI) into the UK, according to a new joint report produced by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the High Commission of India in the UK.

The report claims that Maharashtra is on top of the list followed by Karnataka and Delhi.

"Indian Assets: Charting the Journeys of Indian Companies in the UK", launched in London earlier this week, revealed that companies headquartered in Maharashtra brought in the highest amount of FDI into the UK at 20 per cent in 2023, followed by Karnataka (12 per cent) and Delhi (8.6 per cent).

Completing the top 10 tallies are the states of Gujarat (7.1 per cent), Tamil Nadu (6.7 per cent), Telangana (6.5 per cent), Uttar Pradesh (5.9 per cent), Haryana (4.5 per cent), West Bengal (3.14 per cent) and Kerala (3.05 per cent) -- making up 78 per cent of the total FDI from India into the UK.

"As India and the UK continue to evolve and navigate the complexities of a rapidly changing global landscape, I believe that our businesses reimagining the India-UK corridor will realise our shared vision and aspiration for a secure and sustainable future prosperity," said Vikram Doraiswami, the Indian High Commissioner to the UK, who launched the report in London.The analysis finds the leading sector bringing in FDI from India in terms of the number of companies and employees is IT and software, highlighting the achievements of Indian companies in the UK across sectors such as automotive, electric car batteries, diagnostics and healthcare, and technology.

Total trade in goods and services between the UK and India was GBP 39.0 billion in the four quarters to the end of Q4 2023 **PHOTO: PIXABAY**

It also spotlights the positive impact Indian companies can have on heritage British brands and how the value of these legacy brands is retained and protected when acquired by Indian companies.

"Today, Indian companies with operations in the UK have integrated themselves into the British economy, making their mark in industries in almost all leading sectors. Their ability to adapt, innovate, and forge meaningful partnerships has not only propelled their growth but has also enriched the economy of the UK and its regions, promoting job creation, driving investment, and fostering a culture of diversity and inclusion," said CII Director General Chandrajit Banerjee.

Among some of the other findings of the report, new Indian students cumulatively contributed an estimated GBP 4.3 billion to UK universities against the backdrop of a 5 per cent increase in UK student visas last year.

According to the latest official data from the UK's Department of Business and Trade, total trade in goods and services (exports plus imports) between the UK and India was GBP 39.0 billion in the four quarters to the end of Q4 2023, an increase of 4.8 per cent or GBP 1.8 billion in current prices from the four quarters to the end of Q4 2022.

India was the UK's 12th-largest trading partner and the second-largest source market for the UK, bringing in 118 new projects and creating 8,384 jobs. *—PTI*

DISPLAY ASSEMBLY

CBIC clarifies 10% import duty on mobile parts

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

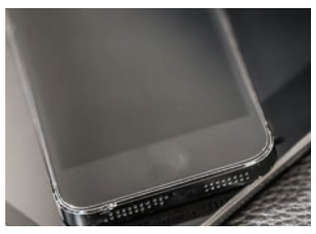


PHOTO: FREEPIK

Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) on Friday listed out parts or components, such as touch panel, cover glass, and LED backlight, which constitute the display assembly of a mobile phone and will attract a 10 per cent import duty.

It also said components, including the frame, SIM tray, and side keys like power/volume button, when fitted/attached to the display assembly, integrated display assembly can be imported at the concessional 10 per cent customs duty.

In a circular, CBIC said currently a concessional basic customs duty (BCD) rate of 10 per cent is imposed on display assembly for use in the manufacture of a cellular mobile phone and a nil BCD rate on inputs or parts for use in the manufacture of a display assembly for use in manufacture of a cellular mobile phone. It said certain cases of misdeclaration by importers were intercepted by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) and other field formations and demand notices were issued in certain cases as well.

With the industry facing "interpretational challenges" with regard to the display assembly of cellular mobile phones, a committee constituted with officials from both CBIC and MeitY, recommended a principle that may be used to determine the interpretation of display assembly for extending the concessional BCD rate.If the display assembly is imported with the items/components, including receiver mesh, speaker net, the whole integrated assembly should also be treated as a display assembly of a cellular mobile phone, attracting a BCD rate of 10 per cent. *—PTI*

Repo rate at 6.5% aligns with expectations: NSE

MUMBAI, 8 JUNE

- This consistent stance underscores the committee's commitment to managing inflation while supporting sustainable growth

Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Monetary Policy Committee's (MPC) decision to keep the policy repo rate steady at 6.5 per cent aligns with market expectations, continuing the trend that has been observed over the past several meetings.

NSE Macro Review stated, "RBI expectedly kept the policy repo rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent, retaining the "withdrawal of accommodation" stance with a 4:2 majority."

The Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) rate and the Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) rate also remain unchanged at 6.25 per cent and 6.75 per cent, respectively.

This consistent stance underscores the committee's commitment to managing inflation while supporting sustainable growth.

For the first time in eight policy meetings, the committee witnessed two dissenting votes. Professors Jayant Varma and Ashima Goyal voted for a 25 bps cut and a shift to a 'neutral' stance, reflecting growing divergence within the committee on the future path of monetary policy.Despite these differences, the majority's decision reflects a cautious approach to inflation management amidst ongoing economic uncertainties.RBI has retained its inflation forecast for FY25 at 4.5 per cent, maintaining a cautious outlook despite a steady downward trend in headline inflation since February 2024.

Core inflation, excluding volatile components like food and fuel, has fallen to its lowest in recent years.However, food inflation remains a persistent concern due to rising prices in essential items such as pulses, vegetables, cereals, and spices.The outlook for inflation is clouded by several risks, including supply chain disruptions, fluctuating crude oil prices, and adverse weather conditions impacting agricultural productivity.

The MPC has expressed the need to remain vigilant on inflation, particularly food inflation, which is susceptible to unpredictable weather patterns and global commodity price volatility.

The projected quarterly inflation rates for FY25 also remain unchanged from the previous policy meeting, indicating a steady path toward achieving a medium-term target of 4 per cent. *—ANI*

GSTN introduces forms to record tax for tobacco makers

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

GST Network (GSTN) has rolled out a special form for manufacturers of pan masala and tobacco products to report inputs and outputs procured with tax authorities to check evasion.

This new form GST SRM-II came within a month of GSTN rolling out form GST SRM-I for registering machines of such manufacturers.

Moore Singhi Executive Director Rajat Mohan said the newly available Form GST SRM-II requires detailed monthly reporting of inputs and outputs.

Taxpayers are advised to familiarise themselves with the details and instructions provided in these forms to ensure seamless compliance and avoid any potential penalties, he added.

In January, CBIC) announced the introduction of a new registration and monthly return filing procedure to improve GST compliance for manufacturers of pan masala and tobacco products effective 1 April. The date was later extended to 15 May.

The move to overhaul the registration, record-keeping, and monthly filing of such businesses was aimed at improving GST compliance for manufacturers of pan masala and tobacco products.

GST Network (GSTN) has rolled out a special form for manufacturers of pan masala and tobacco products **PHOTO: PIXABAY**

- Taxpayers are advised to familiarise themselves with the details and instructions provided in these forms to ensure seamless compliance and avoid penalties, he added

The GST law was also amended via Finance Bill 2024 to say that manufacturers of pan masala, gutkha and similar tobacco products will have to pay a penalty of up to Rs 1 lakh, if they fail to register their packing machinery with GST authorities with effect from 1 April.

However, this penalty provision is yet to be notified.

The procedure was to be applicable for manufacturers of pan-masala, unmanufactured tobacco (without lime tube) with or without a brand name, 'Hookah' or 'gudaku' tobacco, smoking mixtures for pipes and cigarettes, chewing tobacco (without lime tube), filter khaini, jarda scented tobacco, snuff and branded or unbranded 'Gutkha', etc.

The manufacturers of such tobacco products were required to furnish the details of packing machines being used for filling and packing of packages in Form GST SRM-I, electronically within 30 days of the notification coming into effect ie 1 April, 2024. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PIXABAY

INDIA NEEDS TO RAMP UP SKILLS IN AI: EXPERTS

BENGALURU, 8 JUNE

The conclusion of the India Global Innovation Connect (IGIC) 2024 in Bengaluru on Friday, has underscored the pressing need for India to bolster its skill development initiatives, particularly in the realm of artificial intelligence (AI) and related fields.

Amitabh Kant, G20 Sherpa for India, has articulated the urgent imperative to bridge the gap between industry demands and the available talent pool.

Kant emphasised the necessity for a strategic overhaul of engineering education to align with contemporary demands in AI, machine learning, data science, and cybersecurity.

The 3rd Edition of the India Global Innovation Connect (IGIC) 2024 concluded in Bengaluru on Saturday, setting a course for transformative changes in the realms of technology, skilling, and innovation.

Kant said, "There is an urgent need to bridge the gap between industry demands and the available talent pool and ramp-up the skilled engineers pool in India, particularly in areas where there is a high demand, such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, data science, and cybersecurity."

He added, "The curriculum of many of these engineering colleges and our IITs needs to be totally reoriented and restructured to align with the demands of today, to address the supply chain issue. The next 5 years of the Government will focus will on skilling and apprenticeship to create a vast number of new jobs."

Claude Smadja, Chairman of Smadja & Smadja Strategic Advisory, hailed the successful conclusion of IGIC 2024 as a significant milestone in promoting global collaboration within digital and startup ecosystems. *—ANI*

Musk congratulates Modi, hints at working in India

NEW YORK, 8 JUNE

- Musk who was expected to be in India on 21 and 22 April and scheduled to meet Modi —later wrote on X that he is looking forward to coming to India

American tech billionaire Elon Musk has said he is looking forward to his companies doing "exciting work" in India, as he congratulated Prime Minister designate Narendra Modi on his historic election victory.

Modi will be administered the oath of office on 9 June, his third consecutive term as Prime Minister.

The congratulatory message came two months after the CEO of the electric carmaker Tesla and microblogging platform X in April postponed his proposed visit to India due to "very heavy Tesla obligations".Musk—who was expected to be in India on 21 and 22 April and scheduled to meet Modi —later wrote on X that he is looking forward to coming to India later this year.

In June last year, Musk met with Modi during the latter's US visit and stated that he planned to visit India in 2024 while expressing confidence that Tesla would enter the Indian market soon.

His proposed visit had raised expectations that he would announce plans for electric car maker Tesla to set up shop in the country, along with his satcom venture Starlink.

It was also expected that Musk would announce plans for Tesla to set up its manufacturing unit in India and investments could be to the tune of billions of dollars and the way forward for selling Tesla electric cars in India at the earliest.

Not just electric cars, he is also eyeing the Indian market for his satellite internet business Starlink, for which regulatory approvals are awaited. *—PTI*

'9 in 10 of LGBTQIA+ prioritise savings over financial security'

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

The flagship study of Max Life Insurance Company Limited (Max Life), the India Protection Quotient Survey (IPQ), in partnership with KANTAR, has revealed insights into the financial preparedness of the LGBTQIA+ community in India from the perspective of life insurance.

Under the vision of 'One India-Protection for All', the PAN-India survey includes the LGBTQIA+ community for the first time to understand their financial preparedness.

With a population estimated to be around 135 million people, or around 10 per cent of India's 1.4 billion population, the LGBTQIA+ community represents a significant segment whose financial preferences and challenges cannot be overlooked.12

Survey reveals financial preparedness of LGBTQIA+ **PHOTO: PIXABAY**

With a Protection Quotient of 37 points, the LGBTQIA+ community exhibited a 17-point difference in financial preparedness, as compared to the digitally-savvy urban Indian at 54 points.

In contrast, the LGBTQIA+ community has displayed a commendable level of awareness, understanding, and proactive engagement in financial planning, with 99 per cent individuals aware of life insurance products.

Despite high awareness, ownership of life insurance in the community stands at 68 per cent, as opposed to 80 per cent ownership in the digital cohort. *—PTI*

PROFIT DOUBLES IN A YEAR

The rise and rise of fashion giant Shein

SINGAPORE, 8 JUNE

The biggest order 17-year-old Michaela says she ever made on Shein was for £150, when she bought "16 plus items".

Like millions of others, she's a huge fan of the ultra-fast fashion giant, mostly because of how affordable it is. She also likes the way the influencers on YouTube she watches offer Shein discount codes, which makes her "buy more".

The Chinese-founded firm - which also sells a huge range of beauty and home products - doubled its profits to more than £1.6bn last year, making more than the Swedish fashion group H&M and the UK's Primark and Next.

Today, it ships to customers in 150 countries across the world. However, as the company explores a plan to list its shares on the London Stock Exchange, it remains dogged by controversy over its environmental impact and working practices - including allegations of forced labour in its supply chain.

Michaela is aware of the backlash and particularly concerned by the amount of plastic Shein uses in its packaging. But she feels most fashion brands face similar criticism and that "not everyone can afford high-end clothing".

"So, at the back of my mind I feel quite bad when I purchase things, but at the same time it's convenient," she tells BBC.

Shein, pronounced "she-in", was set up in China in 2008 by entrepreneur Xu Yangtian and started out selling wedding dresses online. Since then it has grown into a global behemoth, best known for selling on-trend clothing, mostly to a Gen Z customer base.

A big part of the appeal? The price. The average cost of a Shein-branded clothing item is just £7.90 and at any one time, it has as many as 6,00,000 items for sale on its online platform, dwarfing rivals like Zara or Boohoo.

It's also snapped up competitors like Missguided, while Xu Yangtian, who rarely gives interviews, is now said to be one of China's richest men. *—BBC News*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

T20 WORLD CUP

Mystery pitch awaits crestfallen Pak in T20 WC match against India

Flower criticized the pitches, saying they were bordering on dangerous

WESTBURY, 8 JUNE

A crestfallen Pakistan goes into its grudge game against archrival India at cricket's Twenty20 World Cup on Sunday with still-painful memories of its huge upset defeat by the United States.

The U.S. beat Pakistan in the Group A game with a historic win in the Super Over at Dallas on Thursday to register its second successive victory in its debut World Cup.

Pakistan captain Babar Azam cannot afford another loss that might put his team's progress to the Super 8 playoff stage in danger.

Nothing seems to have gone right for Pakistan since the Babar-led team lost the T20 World Cup final against England in 2022. Pakistan lost T20 internationals against Afghanistan, understrength New Zealand, Ireland, and England before losing to the U.S. in a shock upset on Thursday.

The reaction back home in Pakistan was predictable.

"USA grounded Pakistan in their opening game," wrote former Pakistan fast bowler Waqar Younis on the social media site X. "History's been registered. Pakistan looked exhausted and helpless in the field. Congrats USA for a thumping victory."

A set of mystery drop-in pitches that has a variable bounce at the purpose-built 34,000-capacity stadium on Long Island in Westbury, New York awaits Babar's struggling batters against the likes of Indian fast bowlers Jasprit Bumrah and Muhammed Siraj.

Former Zimbabwe captain Andy Flower criticized the pitches in New York, saying they were bordering on dangerous.

"I've got to say that is not a good surface to play an international match on," Flower said, "It's bordering on dangerous. The match starts at 8 pm IST

—AP

Indian cricket team players Virat Kohli and Yashasvi Jaiswal during a training session ahead of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup cricket match between India and Pakistan, in New York **PHOTO: X / @T20WORLDCUP**

Game-changers score more than 2 per ball: Sidhu

Former India cricketer Navjot Singh Sidhu believes that the word game-changer should not be thrown around loosely in T20 cricket as only those who can score at least two runs per ball deserve to be described like that.Strike rates were a hot topic during the IPL last month and also amid the low-scoring games of the ongoing T20 World Cup here."See, game changers are those who will score 2 runs in a ball," Sidhu said on 'Star Sports Press Room'.

NORWAY CHESS

Pragg beats Nakamura; Carlsen wins

STAVANGER, 7 JUNE

Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa ended his campaign on a positive note by defeating American Hikaru Nakamura in the finale to sign off third even as world number one Magnus Carlsen won the Norway Chess tournament here.

Carlsen walked away with prize money of 7,00,000 NOK (Around USD 65,000 reserved for the winner) for ending with 17.5 points in the unique tournament that ensured that each round had a winner either through Classical time control or Armageddon if the game ended in a draw.

Nakamura finished second on 15.5 points despite losing to Praggnanandhaa, who concluded third on 14.5 points.

Praggnanandhaa can be happy with the fact that he defeated the top three ranked players in the world in one of the strongest-ever tournaments.

R Praggnanandhaa **PHOTO: X /@PRAGG_CHESS**

He had beaten Carlsen and Caruana under Classical time control earlier in the tournament and his win against Nakamura ensured that he became the first player ever to beat the top three.

The fourth place went to Alireza Firouzja (13.5 points) who accounted for reigning world champion Ding Liren of China. The Iranian-turned-Frenchman also won under the Armageddon, leaving Liren at the bottom of the standings behind Caruana who finished on 10 points for fifth place. *—PTI*

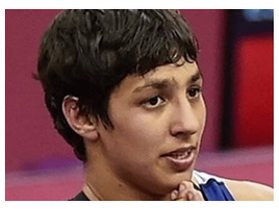


PHOTO: PTI

Anshu Malik settles for silver in Budapest

BUDAPEST, 8 JUNE

Indian woman wrestler Anshu Malik could not match the skills of her 21-year-old Chinese rival Kexin Hong in the final, bowing out tamely to settle for a silver in the 57kg category of the Budapest Ranking Series here. Competing against the No.1 ranked Chinese, Anshu lost 1-12 on technical superiority against the Hangzhou Asian Games bronze medallist in the 53kg category. India's Antim Panghal had earlier fought hard to settle for a silver in the 53kg category, while star wrestler Vinesh Phogat lost to Jiang Zhu of China 0-5 in the quarterfinals in the 50kg category.*—PTI*

B'desh win low-scoring thriller against SL

DALLAS, 8 JUNE

Young leg-spinner Rishad Hossain claimed a splendid 3/22 before veteran Mahmudullah Riyad kept his composure in a tricky chase as Bangladesh pipped Sri Lanka by two wickets to make a winning start to the T20 World Cup here. On a reasonably good Dallas surface, Rishad's googlies and leg-breaks broke the back of Lankans as his three wickets in seven deliveries restricted the islanders to 124 for 9. Rishad returned with 3/22 from his four overs. From being 70/2 in 8.4 overs, Sri Lanka lost seven wickets for 54. Mustafizur Rahman (3/17) also bowled his customary slow off-cutters which Sri Lankans found hard to negotiate.*—AP*

WI in search of batting mojo vs Uganda

GEORGETOWN, 8 JUNE

Co-hosts West Indies will look to shake off their batting rustiness and come in their element when they face Uganda in a Group C T20 World Cup clash here. The pre-tournament favourites and two-time former champions suffered a scare chasing a modest 137 before they scraped to a five-wicket win over minnows Papua New Guinea in their opening match. On a difficult pitch that required patience and application, West Indies batters kept playing recklessly and found themselves half the side down for 97 with just four overs remaining. It was then left to Roston and Russell to safely take them home and avoid an embarrassment.*—AP*

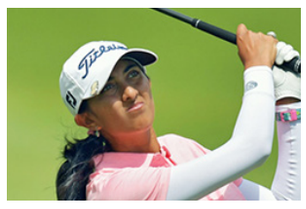
Aditi lies Tied-51st at LPGA Classic

GALLOWAY, 8 JUNE

Aditi Ashok shot a modest 2-under 69 and was lying T-51 after the first round at the ShopRite LPGA Classic.

Aditi, who has been having an average season, had four birdies in the first 10 holes but dropped two shots thereafter.

Thailand's Arpichaya Yubol, who had a chance to shoot a 59, carded 61. She began her opening round on the second nine at Seaview's Bay Course and came to her closing hole, the par-5 ninth, needing an eagle to match Annika Sorenstam's 59 shot in 2001. Yubol was 10-under par when she arrived at the 477-yard, par-5 where the young Thai hit her third shot, a pitch from short of the green, to within 10 feet of the hole. Yubol two-putted from there for par and closed with a round of 61 to tie the tournament record at the ShopRite LPGA Classic.



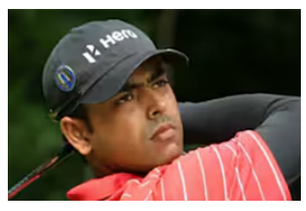
Aditi Ashok **PHOTO: PTI**

Lahiri fires 69, lies T-15 in Liv Golf Houston

Anirban Lahiri had a sluggish start with several pars before finding the momentum and lifting himself to 3-under for the first round of the Liv Golf Houston. He was Tied-15 alongside Bryson DeChambeau and Jon Rahm.

Starting from the 13th, Lahiri had six pars, found birdies five times in the next seven holes, and ended with a 69 in the USD20m event.

—PTI



Anirban Lahiri **PHOTO: PTI**

FRENCH OPEN FINAL

Iga Swiatek defeats Jasmine Paolini

PARIS, 8 JUNE

Defending champion Iga Swiatek has won the first set of the French Open final against Jasmine Paolini 6-2 at Court Philippe Chatrier.

Paolini is trying to accomplish something Saturday that no one has been able to do in quite some time: defeat Iga Swiatek at Roland Garros.

The top-seeded Swiatek carried a 20-match French Open winning streak into the final against the 12th-seeded Paolini.

Swiatek, a 23-year-old from Poland, is bidding for her third consecutive title in Paris. It would also be her fourth championship in five years at the clay-court major and fifth Grand Slam trophy overall, The AP reported.

She is 4-0 in Grand Slam finals so far. She won the US Open in 2022.

Italy's Paolini is participating in a major final for the first time at age 28. She had never been past the second round at one of the four most important tennis tournaments until the Australian Open in January.

She also reached the French Open women's doubles final, which is scheduled for Sunday.

Paolini and Sara Errani will face 2023 US Open singles champions Coco Gauff and Katerina Siniakova for the doubles title. *—AP*

Iga Swiatek of Poland celebrates with her winner's trophy after victory against Jasmine Paolini of Italy **PHOTO: X / @IGA.SWIATEK**

Scottie Scheffler **PHOTO: X /@SCHEFFLERLEGION**

Scheffler takes 3-shot lead

DUBLIN, 8 JUNE

Two-time Masters champion Scottie Scheffler stayed solid in gusty winds as he finished strong for a 4-under 68 to a three-shot lead in the Memorial Tournament

Alongside his 5-under 67 on the first day he is 9-under.

Indian American Akshay Bhatia (69-72) stayed in Tied-seventh and Sahith Theegala (73-71) was T-20. Among the big names Rory McIlroy (70-71) and Xander Schauffele (was T-7.

Scheffler was at 9-under 135, three shots ahead of Viktor Hovland (69) and Adam Hadwin (72), chasing another $4 million prize.

Scheffler's 3-iron into the wind narrowly cleared the bunker and went up the slope to 8 feet for eagle on the par-5 15th. Then he closed with two solid par saves and a shot from a fairway bunker to 12 feet for birdie to take a three-shot lead.

The Memorial is the seventh of eight Signature Events this season, and one of the three tournaments with player hosts — the Arnold Palmer Invitational presented by Mastercard, The Genesis Invitational (Tiger Woods), and the Memorial (Jack Nicklaus).

With a dry forecast to get the Muirfield Village course even firmer, it most likely will only get more difficult on the weekend.Christiaan Bezuidenhout of South Africa had the low round of the second day at 67 and was four shots behind.

—AP

INDIAN WOMEN GO DOWN 2-4 TO GERMANY

LONDON, 8 JUNE

The Indian women's hockey team could not break its sequence of half-a-dozen consecutive losses in the FIH Pro League, losing to Germany 2-4, its seventh successive defeat in the tournament here on Saturday.

The Indians squandered a two-goal advantage when Sunelita Toppo and Deepika scored excellent field goals in the opening quarter to give the Harendra Singh-coached side the best chance to break the jinx.

Sunelita (9th) and Deepika (15th) scored superb field goals to give India a huge morale-boosting 2-0 lead but soon saw it being canceled out by Germany's Viktoria Huse, who converted penalty corners in the 23rd and 32nd minutes to bring her team on level terms.

India women's hockey team player Salima Tete in action against Germany in the FIH Pro League encounter in London **PHOTO: WORLDSPORTPICS**

Pascal rescues Germany with last-gasp winner against Greece

DUBAI, 8 JUNE

An 89th-minute winner from Pascal Gross snatched Euro 2024 hosts Germany a 2-1 win against Greece in a friendly in Moenchengladbach on Friday, one week out from the tournament's curtain-raiser. Brighton midfielder Gross blasted a rocket past German-born Greece goalkeeper Odysseas Vlachodimos in the final minute to win the match for the home side, after Kai Havertz earlier cancelled out Georgios Masouras' opener. Despite coach Julian Nagelsmann naming his strongest XI, Germany lacked fluidity against the 2004 Euros winners, who did not qualify for this summer's tournament, having lost a play-off qualifier to Georgia on penalties. *—AP*

PHOTO: @PASCALGROSS_

Diksha misses first cut in four months

HELSINGBORG, 8 JUNE

Diksha Dagar missed her first cut since February this year as she exited early in the Volvo Car Scandinavian Mixed Open.

Diksha shot rounds of 75 and 73 over two days and fell well short of the cut line.

She was 4-over and the cut fell at 2-under.

She had three birdies in the second round but also gave away four bogeys. She had one birdie and three bogeys on the opening day.

This was Olympic-bound Diksha's second missed cut in the season during which she has had three top-10 finishes.

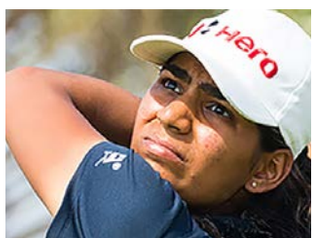
Shubhankar Sharma, who had a superb start in the first round with three birdies, repeated his 69 in the second. In both rounds, he had five birdies against two bogeys to be 6-under.

When the second round finally ended late in the evening, he was tied 20. Swede Sebastian Söderberg leads the field with 63-66 at 15-under and is way ahead of the field. The closest rival is Scott Jamieson (67-65) at 12-under.

Lying third is Frenchman Julien Guerrier (69-64) at 11-under.

Jorge Campillo (68-67) is lying fourth at 9-under with (68-67) alongside three Swedes -- the 2022 champion Linn Grant (67-68), the leading woman player, Jesper Svensson (68-67) and Jens Danthorp (68-67).

—PTI



Diksha Dagar **PHOTO: X / @DIKSHADAGAR14**

MATCH AGAINST QATAR

Stimac names 23-member squad

KOLKATA, 8 JUNE

Indian football head coach Igor Stimac on Saturday named a 23-member squad without the defensive trio of Mohun Bagan veteran Subhasish Bose, Mumbai FC's Amey Ranawade and Lalchungnunga of East Bengal for its away World Cup Qualifier against Qatar on Tuesday.

This will be India's first match after the retirement of Sunil Chhetri, who made his last international appearance in a frustrating goalless draw against Kuwait in their second-round World Cup Qualifier at Salt Lake Stadium on Thursday.

Stimac chose to give Jay Gupta the debut as both Bose and Ranawade started on the bench and did not get any minutes in their match against Kuwait.

Lalchungnunga, however, was not named in the Indian team list against Kuwait.

Indian football head coach Igor Stimac **PHOTO: PTI**

India has five points and is behind table-toppers Qatar who have 13 in the Group A standings. Afghanistan and Kuwait have five and three points, occupying the third and fourth places respectively.

While Qatar has sealed their third-round berth, the other three teams, including India and bottom-placed Kuwait, have a chance to cut.

Kuwait will face Afghanistan at home in their concluding second-round clash.

India must win against the two-time Asian champions Qatar to make their maiden appearance in the third round of Asia's top-18 teams.

A point will be enough for the Blue Tigers if the Afghanistan versus Kuwait tie also ends in a draw.

However, a defeat in Qatar will end India's hopes of progressing, irrespective of the other result.

The Blue Tigers will travel to Doha from Kolkata on Saturday evening.

India squad

Goalkeepers: Gurpreet Singh Sandhu, Amrinder Singh, Vishal Kaith.

Defenders: Anwar Ali, Jay Gupta, Mehtab Singh, Narender, Nikhil Poojary, Rahul Bheke.

Midfielders: Anirudh Thapa, Brandon Fernandes, Edmund Lalrindika, Jeakson Singh Thounaojam, Lallianzuala Chhangte, Liston Colaco, Mahesh Singh Naorem, Nandhakumar Sekar, Sahal Abdul Samad, Suresh Singh Wangjam.

Forwards: Manvir Singh, Rahim Ali, Vikram Partap Singh, David Lalhlansanga.

—PTI